

Eliza Giffard

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THE INVISIBLE ENEMY.



A ROMANCE.



Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.



Eliza Giffard
THE
INVISIBLE ENEMY;

OR,

THE MINES OF WIELITSKA.

A Polish Legendary Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY T. P. LATHY,

AUTHOR OF

USURPATION, THE PARACLETE, &c. &c.

Nature! great Parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul!

THOMSON.

VOL. II.

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THE

INVISIBLE ENEMY.

CHAP. I.

“THE morning on which you left Zabno, to return to Vistulof, I set out on my return to Cracow in a chaise, accompanied by the officer of police, who was charged to see me safe in my mother’s house. When the chaise stopped at the door, my heart palpitated so, that I could scarcely reach it, when I alighted, without the assistance of my companion. I did not know the servant, who answered me at the door, that Mrs.

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B

Dauvernop

Dauvernop was gone to confession, but that she was expected home at the usual dinner hour. I told her, without acquainting her who I was, that I was in no hurry, and would wait till she returned, as I had very particular business with her. The officer seeing me at the place of my destination, and wishing to return immediately to Zabno, took leave of me, after having made me promise that I would give him news of myself.

“My mother’s domestic introduced me into the drawing-room, where I seated myself, and began to reflect on my strange destiny. The hour at which my mother dined was not far off, and I expected her every moment to make her appearance, with a sensation which it is almost impossible to describe to you. The dinner hour, however, passed away, and it grew dusk, but my mother never came. Her domestics, who were amusing themselves below, in the absence of their mistress, with drinking her wine and eating her provisions,
with

with their comrades in the neighbourhood, had totally forgotten that any one waited for Mrs. Dauvernop; and, although night was come, yet they did not even bring me a light. The extreme want of nourishment, the convulsive agitation which I endured, and the tears which I had shed, had caused such a weakness as, joined to the darkness of the night, soon plunged me into a deep sleep. In the mean time, Mrs. Dauvernop, who, contrary to her inclination, had been detained to dinner by a friend whom she accidentally met, came home; but the domestics, whose memory was confused by the vapours of the wine, forgot to tell her that any one was waiting for her in the parlour. My mother's sleeping-room was contiguous to the drawing-room, but as it had another entrance, she went to it without passing through the drawing-room—it was then eleven o'clock.

“The news of my death had made a great impression on my mother, and as she had passed the whole of the day with her friend

in discoursing of, and bewailing her affliction, she lay down so full of melancholy reflections, that it was some time before she slept. It was past midnight, when she was startled at a well-known voice, which spoke in plaintive accents—She listened with the utmost consternation and attention, and distinguished these sounds:—
‘ Oh, merciful God! pardon my mother! She would never have subjected me to such harsh treatment, if she could have imagined that it would have conducted me to death. Oh Heaven! do not punish her; she is sufficiently penitent.’

“ It was I who pronounced this prayer, whilst labouring under a most frightful dream, which had been undoubtedly caused by those dismal impressions under which I fell asleep. As my mother had likewise sunk into repose, reflecting on my unhappy fate, she was terrified at being awakened by such a prayer, uttered in my well-known voice.

‘ Heaven! what do I hear?’ cried she,
whilst

whilst the darkness still added to her terror; 'where am I? The wrath of the Eternal is about to fall upon me, and my unhappy daughter, from the depth of her grave, endeavours in vain to divert the storm from my guilty head. Whither shall I fly from an offended God?—my blood is congealed—Theresia, my daughter, thou hast pardoned me; forgive me also, avenging Heaven!'

"Either the fright of my dream, or my mother's exclamation, had roused me also, and I no sooner heard my mother's voice crying out upon the name of Theresia, than I answered—

'Dearest mother, here I am. I have escaped from the regions of death—be comforted—I fly to embrace you!'

"At these words I quitted the sofa on which I had thrown myself, walked softly towards the door which communicated with her chamber, gently turned the key, and opened it. As the silence of midnight made the least sound audible, my motions

threw my mother, who was now convinced she was awake, into an inexpressible alarm.

‘Who is there?’ said she, with a trembling voice.’

‘It is your daughter,’ replied I, as I approached her bedside.

‘Alas! I can no longer doubt it,’ cried my mother; ‘it is Theresia, who comes to make me bear her company to the shades of death.’

“As I stretched out my hands to guide my steps in the midst of the darkness, I met those of my mother, who no sooner felt the contact than she uttered a piercing cry, and fell backwards in a swoon. I strove to reanimate her, by imprinting kisses on her forehead and cheeks. At that instant, my mother’s waiting-woman, who had been alarmed at her mistress’s outcry, entered the chamber with a light. She saw me lying on the bed with my face close to that of Mrs. Dauvernop.

‘What does this woman do here?’ cried she; and then recollecting me, she added

—‘Are

—‘Are not you the person whom we forgot to announce to my mistress yesterday?’

‘Yes, yes,’ replied I; ‘assist me to recover my mother.’

‘Is my mistress your mother?’ said she.

‘Yes. I am her daughter; she thinks that I am dead, and the sound of my voice has plunged her into this state.’

‘My mistress has been excessively grieved at your supposed death—By what unaccountable accident are you still in the land of the living?’

‘You shall know that at a future time; at present, think only on bestowing on my mother that attention which her situation demands.’

“Alice, that was her name, then hastened to find my mother’s smelling-bottle, and applied it to her nostrils. The vapour instantly caused her to make some motion, and Alice desired me to conceal myself a moment.

“When my mother opened her eyes and beheld her waiting-woman—

‘Ah Alice!’ said she, ‘I have had a most horrible dream.’

‘Endeavour to compose yourself, Madam.’

‘My daughter, whose loss I deplore, appeared to drag me with her to the grave.’

‘Take courage, Madam.’

‘Unfortunate Theresia! I would give my own life to bring thee back again.’

‘Strive to master your grief, Madam.’

‘Fatal stratagem!—Dreadful advice of Colonel Darnim!—Grief drove her to the fatal act which terminated her existence.’

‘She has not terminated her existence.’

‘What do you say?’

‘Would you not be restored to happiness, if you should behold her again?’

‘I never shall; why should I form vain hopes?’

‘Yet—but I must hold my peace—you are not in a condition to hear.’

‘What!’

‘What! that my daughter lives? Speak, I am prepared for all events.’

‘The news of her death are false then.’

‘What do I hear!—No, no, it cannot be; you deceive me.’

‘No, Madam; even at this very moment she is nearer to you than you imagine.’

‘Speak out: put an end to this cruel suspense.’

‘Pardon me, Madam, I have told you all that prudence will permit me to say for the present.’

‘Where is she? where is my Theresia? Let me press her to my heart.’

‘I could withhold no longer, but stepping from behind Alice, I cried out—

‘Oh my mother! here’s your daughter; it is she who holds you in her arms.’

‘Heavens! is it possible?’ cried my mother, who continued motionless for several minutes. ‘Yes, it is indeed—I am not deceived. Do you still breathe, after that your name has been inscribed on the obituary of the convent to which I had inhu-

manly condemned you? By what miracle are you restored to me? Who has conducted you hither at this hour of night?’

“I related to her, in as few words as possible, all the circumstances which had preceded my apparent death, and followed my resuscitation. After my mother had testified the utmost astonishment, she said—

‘Oh my daughter! can you behold me without horror—I who, from your infancy, have not ceased to make you drink out of the cup of bitterness—I who have myself conducted you to the most frightful exile!—How ought I to despise myself for the fatal rigour with which I have pursued you! Heaven, however, knows that I have acted only from weakness and a mistaken zeal for the memory of your father. I designed, it is true, your union with the son of the intimate friend of my husband; but I should never have been so violently bent on forcing your inclination, if I had not been urged on by the advice of a madman, for so I must call Colonel Dar-
nim.

nim. Believe me, my dear daughter, this last act of tyranny was suggested to me by him.—It was owing to his persuasion and example, that I have yielded to immure thee in that abode of despair; he himself, to conquer the opposition of his son Zedeo, had shut him up in a dungeon. The ascendancy which he had gained over me, the religious respect which I preserved for the memory of your father, and a phantom of duty, impelled me to persist in the scheme of uniting you to Zedeo. The aversion which you testified to him and marriage, raised my indignation; your refusal appeared to me an outrage to the manes of your father, and a criminal contempt of my authority. From that time I determined to take the measures which Colonel Darnim had represented to me, as alone capable of triumphing over your resistance—a temporary seclusion; for do not imagine that you were to pass the rest of your days in that gloomy convent. You were not condemned to undergo a perpetual detention;

there was even no order of government obtained for your seclusion: but I had agreed with the superior that every step should be taken to persuade you that it had been granted. I had only intended to have left you some months in this conviction, at the end of which they were to have promised you, as if by order of government, an abridgment of your captivity, on condition that you would have consented to have given your hand to Zedeo.—How fatal had like to have been the issue of this artifice of Colonel Darnim, from which he had made me hope for so much success!—This stratagem has nearly cost you your life, since it was only the prospect of a perpetual confinement which determined you to free yourself from the burthen of existence. If you could have seen what I suffered at the time, in the bottom of my heart—if you knew the repentance and remorse which followed the catastrophe, perhaps your resentment would yield to pity. Too long have I given you
only

only pain, now I will consult only your happiness: you shall receive from your mother as many caresses as you have hitherto suffered injuries: never more will I seek to constrain your heart — Point out to me the lover whom you may prefer, and he shall soon become your husband; or if you persist in rejecting that engagement, continue in celibacy—I will not urge you to make any choice. Your cruel torments have opened my eyes to the imprudence and barbarity of those parents who, like despots, dispose of the destiny of their children, and sacrifice their dearest inclinations to avarice, caprice, prejudice, or convenience.’

‘My dear mother,’ replied I, ‘how could I find it in my heart to make you any reproaches, whilst you are so severe upon yourself. At the bare remembrance of your rigour towards me, your grief is so excessive, that it is impossible I can attribute it to the motion of the heart. In all the evils which you have occasioned me, I
have

have recognised the influence of some foreign impulse. Let us begin a new career; I will not grieve you by any painful recollections—let our mutual faults be effaced, and an interchange of indulgence take place. The idea of my death has made you a new mother—by measuring the depth of the grave, I have made another step towards perfection: my heart is regenerated—I shall be to you a new daughter.’

‘Do you consent to love me still,’ replied my mother, ‘in spite of all the violence which I have exercised against you? Ah! how so much filial piety adds to the regret which I experience at my tyranny!’

‘My dear mother,’ said I, ‘how can I avoid being sensibly touched by the grief with which I see you penetrated? Gentleness and mild behaviour hold the empire over me. If, instead of listening to Colonel Darnim, you had never employed but those means, perhaps in the end I should have submitted to your will; but threats and violence only served to render me refractory.’

fractory. Be convinced that the stratagem of Colonel Darnim would have never produced the intended effect: in vain would they have offered me to put an end to my captivity, on condition that I would have consented to marry Zedeo; you know that I preferred death.'

"Here I gave her a full account of all my sufferings in the convent, and the effect which they produced. My mother's tears began to flow afresh, and my eyes were not drier than her's: our mutual transports raised us to the highest point of tenderness. Alice perceiving us exhausted by such violent emotions, ran to fetch some liqueurs, of which she made us drink; after which, she recollected that I had passed the greater part of the preceding day without food, and she placed some before me. My mother then bade her prepare my bed; and after having again tenderly embraced each other, we separated, and remained in our chambers till the next noon.

"My

“ My mother has since evinced her determination of permitting me to be mistress of my own inclinations; and I had no sooner informed her of my desire to visit the amiable couple, whose misfortunes we had occasioned, than she complied with the utmost cheerfulness.”

CHAP. II.

THERESIA had scarcely finished this interesting sequel to her history, before Rhodiska perceived Rosomaski and Mrs. Dauvernop returning in search of them, accompanied by Ludowico, who was abroad when the guests arrived, but had come in search

search of his friends. When they drew near enough to be heard, Rosomaski said—

“Beautiful Theresia, would you not wish to see the person who rescued you from the fatal instruments of the anatomist of Zabno?”

“Certainly,” replied Theresia: “I should rejoice to see and speak my gratitude to my deliverer from so dreadful a catastrophe.”

“Well then,” said Rosomaski, presenting Ludowico, “you see him before you:—this is my friend Ludowico, who was happy enough to render you so important a service.”

“It is true,” said Ludowico, with a modest air, “that it was I who, conducted by chance to the place where you lay at the mercy of imprudent ignorance, prevented the fatal error which threatened your existence.”

Theresia ran to embrace him, and expressed her acknowledgments in terms full of sensibility. Ludowico could not feel himself in the arms of a most beautiful woman, without

without being moved ; but reflecting that she had an aversion to all men, and to the tie of marriage, (as he had heard from Rosomaski and Rhodiska,) he refrained from giving way to the soft inclination which drew him forcibly towards her. Not thinking her susceptible of love, he did not think her so lovely as she really was ; the idea of her insensibility sufficed to banish the momentary intoxication which had at first seized him : he regarded her as one would look on the Venus de Medicis, a beautiful statue, but mere marble. Theresia, however, was more than beautiful ; her grace, her delicate and cultivated understanding, her soul full of noble sentiment, rendered her charms still more valuable. But Ludowico did not know the full extent of her merit ; she could spread those charms over conversation, which delighted the more, as she did not appear to affect any excellence in it. Rhodiska took infinite pleasure in listening to her, and congratulated

gratulated herself on having made so valuable an acquaintance.

They had scarcely returned to the castle, before they saw the police officer of Zabno appear with his guard. He came to inform the inhabitants of Vistulof, that the tribunal of Zabno had finally acquitted them, and freed Ludowico from the security which he had entered into for them. He added, that the tribunal had also charged him to pay another visit to the subterraneans of Vistulof, in order to endeavour to trace out the author of these horrid attempts.

Rosomaski ordered the domestics to get ready their torches, and as Theresia expressed a desire to behold the place where she had lain in the bowels of the earth, Rhodiska agreed to bear her company.— Mrs. Dauvernop, whose health was not re-established, and who, besides, could not bear to witness the place, which must recall to her recollection the most distressing sensations, desired to be left behind. Rhodiska put herself under the protection of
Rosomaski,

Rosomaski, and Theresia accepted the offer of Ludowico to escort her. They then descended with the officer and his guard.

They traversed the first story of the caverns without making any particular discovery; the second story also offered nothing remarkable; but when they had penetrated into the lowest cavern, where they had discovered the trunk which contained the unfortunate Theresia, they discovered, upon a close investigation, a slight chink in the midst of one of the walls. The officer of police examined it with the greatest minuteness, but imagined it to be only an accidental cleft, until one of the soldiers put his foot against the wall, and pushed it with all his force. In an instant the wall yielded to his effort; it was a door formed of stone, like the rest of the wall, and turning on hinges, so that it could scarcely be distinguished from the solid part. They saw before them an arched passage, through which six men might march abreast, but the eye could not measure

sure

sure its length. The officer and his guard led the van, and the rest brought up the rear: as they proceeded, the officer continued his investigation—they heard no noise, nor saw any object. At length, after they had measured a considerable distance, they arrived at another gate of stone, which exactly resembled and opened in the same manner as that which closed the opposite extremity. They now found that the passage widened, by means of several caverns on either hand. As the officer searched all these caverns, they came at length to one which Rhodiska instantly recognised to be the place where she had been confined, when she was carried off by Lanfranco's emissaries. A little further on they came to another cavern, which Rosomaski knew, in like manner, to be that where he had been confined, at the same time.

They were now no longer in doubt as to the place where this suite of subterraneous vaults and passages terminated. Rosomaski conducted

conducted the officer to the outlet, where he had no sooner looked about him, as if to recollect himself, than he exclaimed—

“ Ah! I remember this spot very well: we shall soon have some further light on this dreadful mystery: we are now only half a league from the Monastery of Penitent Females. It is evident that the unfortunate Theresia was introduced through this long subterranean passage, into the caverns of the Castle of Vistulof. Tradition informs us that on this spot there formerly existed a fortress. It appears that by means of this subterranean the garrison communicated with Vistulof, which was at that time an important citadel; as may be gathered from the fragments of the vast towers, battlements, and other works, which still remain. It is equally to be presumed, that the three banditti who, not long after your entrance into Vistulof, attempted to assassinate you, penetrated by night through this same subterranean. You have told me that when they fled, they left a window

open; but that was undoubtedly only a stratagem to blind you, whilst they effected their retreat through the subterraneans. It is no less probable that in one of these subterraneans, Mr. Vendost was concealed, until they inclosed him in the trunk, in which he was brought to Vistulof. Undoubtedly this same trunk must have been conveyed by Zokalef and Dorothea, who have held a correspondence with your secret enemy, to the cave where we found it. If I could discover the place of their retreat, if I could get them into my hands, I would soon draw from them what confessions we want. But let us now endeavour to discover by what means they contrived to get out of the interior of the convent, the coffin in which Theresia was interred."

The whole party then directed their march toward the Convent of Penitent Females, whose church, with painted glass windows, and lofty spire and clock, they soon espied.

The

The officer of police and his escort were no sooner introduced into the area, than he summoned the superior, and all the sisterhood, to assemble in the dress of their function, and hear the orders of government. They obeyed with all possible dispatch, and the officer, with a grave and authoritative air, addressed them thus—

“ Why do you expose the young novices to such harsh and unjust treatment? You have caused the unfortunate Theresia to shorten her days through despair; but heaven, indignant at your barbarity, has performed a miracle in her favour, by calling her to life again.”

At these words he caused Theresia, who gave her hand to Rhodiska, and who was before almost entirely concealed by the soldiers, to advance. At this unforeseen sight, all the nuns uttered a cry of terror. Some remained motionless, with their hands closed, and their eyes raised towards heaven; others fell on their knees, bent their heads towards the ground, and crossed themselves

as

as they repeated their Ave Marias. Others again, who were those who had chiefly contributed to the torments of Theresia, thinking their eternal doom sealed, fell prostrate to the earth, invoking all the saints in the calendar, and seemed to expect, in a mute and religious terror, that the thunder would annihilate them.

Theresia pitied the terrible state into which her sudden appearance had thrown them. She desired the police officer to hush their fears, by confessing that this resuscitation had been produced only by natural causes: she herself joined in extricating the nuns from their stupor. After a while, they succeeded in dissuading them from believing that it had been operated by a miracle. Of all the sensations which they had lately experienced, only astonishment remained. They were desirous to testify to Theresia their satisfaction at seeing her restored to life, and they pressed round to embrace her.

The officer of police interrupted this

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strange scene, by telling them that he wanted to visit the cemetery belonging to the convent. They conducted him to it, and shewed him the place where Theresia's coffin had been deposited. Theresia could not help trembling at beholding the tomb in which she had been precipitated alive, and in which she would have undoubtedly found her death, if a most horrible crime had not been attempted. The earth which covered it appeared to have been recently moved; nothing, however, announced that any burying-place had been violated, so well had the authors of Theresia's removal taken care to efface the traces of the excavation which they had made. The police officer then examined the walls which inclosed this funereal spot; he remarked in the wall a space where the top, which had been covered with fragments of glass, had been totally despoiled of them. It was no longer to be doubted that these were the traces of the passage of the banditti who had removed the coffin.

After

After having noted down these different circumstances, the police officer left the convent with his escort. He again promised that he would continue to make every possible search after the authors of so many horrid plots; and after he had returned to Rosomaski and Rhodiska the diamonds which he had seized at Vistulof, he set off for Zabnò, with the soldiers, who were handsomely rewarded by Rosomaski: the rest then returned to Vistulof, but without repassing the subterranean which they traversed. During the whole of this visit, the novices had remained closely shut up in the work-chamber, and consequently had not been able to know any thing of what had passed.

Mrs. Dauvernop had passed the interval of their absence in impatience, at first, and afterwards in fear. She was deliberating whether she should summon the domestics to go in search of them, when she saw them return. She was delighted at seeing her daughter again, and heard, with astonish-

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ment,

ment, the account of their subterranean expedition.

The sun had already run over two-thirds of the hemisphere, when Mrs. Dauvernop informed her daughter that it was time to think of returning to Cracow.—Rhodiská pressed them to stay some days, but Mrs. Dauvernop could not consent: Theresa, however, promised that she would visit them again, and remain with them some time. They then separated, with an encreasing esteem for each other.

Some of the following days were employed by Rosomaski, in causing a strong wall to be constructed at the two extremities of the subterranean, and bars of iron to be applied to the doors of the caverns, by which wise precautions, he flattered himself that he had secured Vistulof against any more such attempts.

One day two letters were brought to Vistulof; one of them was addressed to Rosomaski, and the other to Rhodiska. The former was written by Mrs. Vendost, who
complained

complained bitterly of not having yet received the diamonds which, she said, her husband had left in their care. The latter was from Theresia, who had conceived a friendship for Rhodiska, and gave her the most ardent assurances of it. Rhodiska was sensible of this testimony of her regard, and she did not lose an instant to return an answer to Theresia, that their friendship was reciprocal.

If Rhodiska deserved to find a friend so interesting as Theresia, Rosomaski was no less worthy of possessing a friend like Ludowico. Delighted with his company, his constant care was to render the residence of Vistulof pleasing to him.

“What a pity it is,” said Rosomaski one day, as he was sitting alone with Rhodiska, “that our friend Ludowico does not entertain any thoughts of taking a companion. His heart is sensible ; I wonder that it has never yet experienced the power of love. I propose to myself to bring him better acquainted with Theresia, and he cannot

behold her often without a tender interest. I am aware of all the obstacles which I shall have to encounter, on the part of Theresia; but if Ludowico should feel any inclination for her, I do not despair of bringing the affair to maturity. After having made friends of them, we will make them lovers, and then man and wife; and if, as I hope, we can prevail on them to come here, and partake our habitation, we shall have fixed near us two friends, whose society will leave us nothing to regret in the world.— Thus, in seeking their satisfaction, we shall have the happiness of contributing to our own.”

Rhodiska had too much confidence in Rosomaski, not to enter into all his views; she replied that she would second his proposal with the utmost pleasure; but she was not so sanguine of success as he was.

Ludowico soon after joined them, and Rosomaski informed him of the scheme which they had formed.

“ My dear friend,” replied Ludowico,
“ the

“ the double proposal which you make me, would render me happy, if I could flatter myself with any hopes that you could accomplish the former part of it. I am now, like yourself, of an age when one feels the want of a companion—to love, is to double one’s own existence : the example of your happiness would be sufficient to fix me, if I were wavering. Besides, would it not be happy for me to pass my days with a beloved wife, and two such friends? I have seen Theresia; she is all that a man could desire, except that she has no heart; and why should I imprudently bestow mine, without the hope of a return? I could have loved Theresia, but after what you have told me of her aversion to man and marriage, I can only admire her.”

“ That is quite sufficient,” replied Rosomaski, “ and for the present I would not have you advance one step further. But if I read Theresia rightly, she has a heart, and a very sensible one, only its sensibility has never yet been roused into action.—

Perhaps you are the happy man destined to make her feel those sensations to which she has been hitherto a stranger. Content yourself with letting her see that you could love her, if there were any hopes of her returning your passion. She owes you an immense load of gratitude, and I am mistaken if she will not be inclined of her own accord to repay it; but you know her independent spirit—seem only to wish but not to expect any thing from her, and I know nothing of the sex, if she does not soon feel the necessity of making you happy, to be so herself.”

“ You have roused a storm of passion within me,” said Ludowico, “ which, ever since I beheld Theresia, I have been endeavouring to smother. Remember that I shall lay all my sufferings, on her account, to your score; therefore, it must be your business to dispose her not to make me endure any heavy ones.”

CHAP. III.

ROSOMASKI now enjoyed perfect security, not only in the state of defence in which he had placed the Castle of Vistulof, against attack or surprise, but in the persuasion that his secret enemies, intimidated by the researches of the agents of the police, would no longer attempt any enterprise against himself, or those who were dear to him: in effect, during the month which had elapsed since his return from Zabno to Vistulof, he had met with nothing to revive his alarms; he gave himself up entirely to the pleasure of dividing his time between an adored wife, and a true and

most estimable friend. When he had received the caresses of his dear Rhodiska, and of his little Paulina and Ladislaus, he went to enjoy the conversation of Ludowico, or else he partook with him the charms of some rural amusement. Sometimes he made him his partner in the work of the garden, of which he himself was passionately fond ; sometimes both together made a party of fishing, or armed with their fowling-pieces, went out to declare war against the partridge and the timid hare ; at others, they took pleasure in climbing the mountains, to collect minerals, and those useful vegetables which serve to reanimate the wasting strength of man, or to transplant them amidst the more artificial productions of their garden.

One day, as they were hunting in company, having ranged to a distance of half a league from the walls of Vistulof, they perceived a man and a woman seated on the bank of a rivulet, which meandered through the forest, where they were amusing
sing

sing themselves with taking their scaley prey, with which those waters abounded. As they drew near to enquire what sport they had had, to their utmost surprise, they recognized in those persons Zokalef and Dorothea. They approached without noise, seized them, and by force of threats, induced them to walk on before them, on the road to Vistulof. They obeyed, but they made the most horrid outcries. In an instant, Rosomaski and Ludowico heard several shrill sounds of a whistle, which set all the echoes round about busy in imitating them. They hastened their prisoners, and soon got them within the walls of Vistulof. After having shut themselves up in a private room with their captives, they endeavoured to extort a confession of their treachery from them.

“ Abominable traitors !” cried Rosomaski, “ have you then forgotten our kindnesses, so far as to link yourselves with the enemies who persecute us, and to act in concert with them, in those horrid plots

which have been contrived against myself and my family? thou especially, Dorothea, art a monster of ingratitude—thy mistress loaded thee with benefits, and made thee her companion, her friend, and thou hast recompensed her with the grossest injuries. More culpable than Zokalef, it is thou who hast made a traitor of him; a bandit of a domestic, who served with fidelity and honesty till thy arts seduced him. Reveal your crimes—tell us the name of the infamous instigator who has taken you into his pay; confess this instant, or I shall deliver you over to the hands of justice.”

“Count Rosomaski,” replied Dorothea, shedding hypocritical tears, “do not ruin me, I pray you: I will hide nothing from you.—Zokalef was no sooner taken into service at Dorbalec, than he professed an attachment to me. He spoke to me of marriage. I made use of the power which I had over him, to engage him to serve the projects of your most cruel enemy. I confess my crimes—do not destroy me. As I
had

had no other fortune than youth and a fresh colour, I could not resist the temptation of the splendid offers which were made me, to favour the enterprises which were meditated against you. The sight of the gold, which was part of the wages of my perfidy, dazzled my eyes, and perverted my senses. Zokalef preserved his scruples some time longer, but I at length overcame them. We have been always made acquainted with the plots which were prepared either to destroy or persecute you—we have constantly assisted their execution, when we have been able to do it, and we divided between us the wages of our crimes.”

“Wretches !” exclaimed Rosomaski, “discover those iniquitous mysteries. Conceal nothing; remember that your fate is in my hands.”

“Be merciful,” replied Dorothea, “and you shall have all the satisfaction which you require. You must know then, that the emissaries of your enemy brought us acquainted with the existence of the subterraneans,

terraneans, which communicated with the caverns of the Castle of Vistulof."

"Who is that enemy?" demanded Rosomaski.

"You will know that in proper time," replied Dorothea; "at present I am going to tell you what caused the rumbling sounds which you have heard in the subterraneans. There exists a communication between the caverns of Vistulof, and those where the Countess and yourself were confined, when you fell into the hands of Lanfranco. At the time of your deliverance, Lanfranco fled, and as he was afraid that this communication would be discovered, he hastily called Cassimir and Zulasko to his aid, and they rolled several fragments of rock, which were destined for that purpose, against the door in the wall, which was at the further extremity of the passage, between the caverns. By these means, the police officers were prevented from perceiving the communication, and left the cavern, persuaded that they had no other outlet than that
from

from the forest, by which they had entered. When your enemy wanted to open this communication, in order to introduce his emissaries, it had been so blockaded by Lanfranco within, that force was necessary to remove the obstacles, which Zokalef alone was unable to perform on the other side; they therefore began their labours in the night, when they thought the family would be all in the upper parts of the castle, out of hearing. That was not the case, however; and the Countess was so much alarmed, that I sent Zokalef to warn them, that they must leave work for that time, or they would be discovered. As Zokalef was aware that the report which the Countess would make, when you came home, would bring on a search in the subterraneans, he took every possible means to prevent the discovering the trap door, by removing some millstones which had been deposited in one of the caverns, and laying them upon the stone which concealed it. This precaution had also the further effect of deadening the
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the sounds of those who were at work at the further extremity. When they had finished their labours, and cleared the passage so far as the trap door, they found themselves unable to raise it, on account of the mill-stones which Zokalef had laid upon it: Zokalef was therefore ordered to remove them. This was his employment on the second night of your alarm, when you descended so hastily to the subterraneans, that Zokalef could not make his retreat without being discovered. You know how readily he averted your suspicions, and made you imagine that the noise had originated only in accident; but the truth was, that Zokalef had turned all the mill-stones, except one, on their edge, and rolled them against the wall of the cavern; but as he was rolling the last, it slipped out of his hand, and falling horizontally on the paved floor, the sound made all the echoes in the subterraneans open their throats, and pour out the noises which alarmed you.

“ Having thus opened to themselves a free:

free passage into the castle, your enemy resolved to sacrifice yourself, your wife, and child. Zokalef and I were at first very averse to this horrid design; but your enemy made us so many valuable presents, that we at length gave way. The three banditti who attacked you at midnight, had resolved to exterminate you, and would have accomplished their purpose, if your friend Ludowico had not providentially interposed. He who headed the banditti, was that implacable enemy, who has sworn an eternal hatred to yourself and your family.

“Having failed in that enterprise, he abandoned the project of attempting your lives, and preferred that of poisoning every moment of them, by keeping you in continual alarms, and raising up against you numberless persecutions. You have seen how constantly he has followed the execution of this design, in which Zokalef and myself have lent him our assistance. From that source sprung the affair of Mr. Ven-

dost and the child, the chief end of which was to inspire you with a fatal jealousy of your virtuous wife. In this scene, Zokalef and myself were of great service, as we knew the muleteer's errand, and were prepared to receive him. Mr. Vëndost, from the time of his seizure to that of his removal, was confined in one of the subterraneans, and the muleteer was one of the emissaries of your enemy, who in the morning had brought the basket, containing the child, which Zokalef was at the gate ready to receive, and I instantly took it from him and conveyed it to my mistress, as had been previously agreed."

"What a monster!" exclaimed Rosomaski; "who could have thought thee capable of such horrid designs! thou deservest to die ten thousand deaths; but I will save thy life, provided you furnish me with the means of discovering all thy accomplices, and especially their instigator.—Without any more delay, tell me their names and their retreat."

"Have

“ Have a little patience,” replied Dorothea, “ and you shall be informed of every circumstance which has come to my knowledge ; but I cannot, without breaking the thread of my story, delay any longer to unravel to you the means which were employed to engage the tribunal of Zabno to arrest yourself and your wife, on suspicion of having poisoned a young woman, with a view to appropriate to yourselves her diamonds. You must recollect, that at the moment when Mr. Vendost discovered the letter inclosing those jewels, Zokalef and myself were then in the room. We had been called in to answer some questions, respecting the muleteer who brought the trunk in which Mr. Vendost was shut up. We saw you receive the diamonds as a deposit, and observed the drawer where you put them, in your writing desk. We informed your enemy of this circumstance, as we were instructed to let him know every thing that passed at Vistulof, in order that he might frame new plots out
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of them, and he instantly conceived the design of making you pass for murderers and robbers. The cemetery of the Convent of Penitent Females was the nearest burying-place, as it was only a quarter of a league distant from the entrance into the subterranean, on the side of the forest.—It had been at first concerted between your enemy and his agents, that they should take a corpse thence, and pierce the bosom of it with a dagger, and then introduce it into the caverns of Vistulof, to make you appear as the assassins ; but the coffin which they had taken from the cemetery of the convent contained a young person, buried in the habits of her order, and as they were about to pierce the bosom with a dagger, they discovered a note written in red characters, as if they had been traced with blood, which announced that she had poisoned herself. This circumstance determined your enemy to denounce you as the author of her death, by poison. He did not expect to see you fall a sacrifice to

to such an accusation; he knew that the truth must be finally discovered; but, at least, he should enjoy the certainty of your being ignominiously carried to the receptacle of the worst malefactors, and of your suffering inexpressible anguish for a while. In the refinement of his vengeance, he enjoyed more in knowing that you were wretched, than he could derive from seeing you perish; because you would then be beyond his reach. It was Zokalef and myself who contrived to convey, in secret, the trunk which brought Mr. Vendost to Vistulof, into the cave where the agents of the police found it; and the other emissaries of your enemy brought the corpse, and placed it in the trunk. When all things were thus prepared, as we could not much longer hope to escape detection, we fled, and Zokalef went to Zabno, with a paper which your enemy had drawn up, containing the accusation, and describing the places where the jewels and the corpse were

were to be found. What ensued is best known to yourself."

"At length," said Rosomaski, surprised at the indifference and effrontery with which she acknowledged her guilt, "thy accursed tongue has run through the black catalogue of thy infamy. Now tell us instantly the name and residence of him who has instigated thee to all these atrocious acts."

"Surely," replied Dorothea, "there can be no need of my telling you the name of the person who takes so much pleasure in your misfortunes: you ought easily to guess it."

She had scarcely pronounced these words before Rhodiska entered, with a wild and distracted air—

"There is some new plot on foot," exclaimed she;—"all the buildings round the poultry-yard are on fire; the flames have already reached the barn, which now pours them out, together with clouds of smoke, on all sides. As the wind blows towards the castle, all the buildings are in danger.—

Hasten,

Hasten, Rosomaski and Ludowico, and direct the servants what to do—they are running up and down in the greatest confusion, without knowing where first to direct their efforts to subdue the devouring element.”

Rhodiska instantly disappeared, without observing, in her terror, that Rosomaski and Ludowico held Zokalef and Dorothea. The crackling and hissing of the fire, and clouds of smoke, intermixed with large flakes of flaming matter, which the wind now blew over the castle, had such an instant surprise upon Rosomaski and Ludowico, that, without bestowing another thought on the wretches in their custody, they ran to join their endeavours to those of the domestics, in stopping the destructive ravages. They had scarcely left the room, before they perceived four men armed, who rushed in, and making a sign to Dorothea and Zokalef, they all disappeared together, before the two friends, divided betwixt the fire and their prisoners,
could

could have the presence of mind to determine whether they had better endeavour to stop the one or the other. The fugitives profited by their hesitation to reach the gate, where they met with no opposition on the part of the porter, who had quitted his post, to give his assistance in putting out the flames. They took out the key, which was on the inside of the gate, and no sooner reached the outside than they locked it, and secured their retreat.

Rosomaski and Ludowico stared at each other some moments with the utmost surprise, but the clamours of the domestics soon assailed their ears, and made them hasten to their assistance. In about two hours they began to get the fire under, which raged so long as it could find materials to nourish it, and in another hour all danger of its rekindling was prevented. The barn, which was filled with grain, as the harvest was just finished, and the tenants had paid their rents in produce, was entirely consumed with its contents; and
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the buildings round the poultry-yard were all levelled to the ground, in smoking ruins.

When the fire was totally extinguished, Rosomaski demanded of the porter why he had permitted those four strangers to enter?

"They offered their services," replied the porter, "to help in putting out the fire."

Rosomaski had an entire confidence in his porter, who had lived with his father, and he would not throw any blame on him, for fear of chagining the old man, of whose fidelity he was assured; he contented himself with ordering him for the future to admit no stranger, till his business was known. Rosomaski had no doubt that the fire had been kindled by the accomplices of Dorothea, who had been alarmed by their outcries in the forest, and suspecting what had happened to them, had taken these means of effecting their liberation. As Rhodiska had paid no attention to the

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prisoners, Rosomaski would neither acquaint her with that affair nor with his suspicions, lest he should give her a new cause of alarm; but he affected to believe that the fire was an accident, occasioned by one of the waggoners of his tenants, who had brought some produce, and by smoaking a pipe, or some other fatal imprudence, had caused the conflagration.

Though Rosomaski dissembled, yet he was no less sensibly affected by this fire; in truth, he bore, with a philosophic resignation, the heavy loss which had been occasioned by this cruel event; but he was inconsolable at having let Zokalef and Dorothea slip through his fingers, at the moment in which the latter was about to reveal to him the name, the retreat, and the motives of his tormentor. In vain did he give the reins to his imagination; he could think of no person who had any occasion to nourish so envenomed a malice against him: he did not think he had ever had an enemy except Lanfranco, of whom
he

he had got rid, by the most just vengeance. No person had even given him any tokens of a marked hatred; he reflected, nevertheless, that sometimes men conceal the resentment which burns within, in order to vent it upon their intended victim with more force and certainty.

“Undoubtedly,” said he, “it is cruel enough to have an implacable enemy, but it is still more terrible to be ignorant who this enemy is. Were he who persecuted me a hundred times more formidable than he is, yet let me know him. When a wretch is struck with lightning, he is warned of his danger by the storm which he sees gathering over his head. Whoever may be the person who vows my destruction, his heart must certainly be as vile as it is atrocious. When a man has any the least degree of magnanimity, it never abandons him, even in the most criminal excesses to which he may be pushed on by vengeance. He who is my invisible enemy, who conceals himself in the shades of

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mystery

mystery to strike at me, deserves only contempt and infamy, since his dark intrigues bespeak only a base cruelty."

Such were the reflections which employed Rosomaski, and served only to augment his perplexity.

CHAP. IV.

ABOUT ten days had elapsed since the fire, which favoured the escape of Zokalef and Dorothea; Rosomaski and Ludowico had made fruitless searches to discover the traces of the four banditti, who, by that audacious enterprise, had taken from them their prisoners. They were discoursing on the presumptive causes of that strange
5 event,

event, when they heard a noise at the gate, and heard the old porter talking in a very loud strain.

They walked out to see the cause of it, and the old porter no sooner beheld them, than he said—

“Count, here are some strangers who desire admittance, but I would not grant it to them, before you were made acquainted with their business.”

“You are right,” replied Rosomaski.

Then the porter opened the wicket and called out—“Tell me who you are, and the gate shall be opened to you.”

“It is Theresia Dauvernop,” replied the person; “a friend of the Count and Countess Rosomaski.”

“Open the gate instantly,” said Rosomaski, “and admit the chaise into the area.”

When those orders were obeyed, Rosomaski saw a young lady alight, accompanied by two domestics. The long black veil which floated over her face, at first

prevented Rosomaski from recognizing Theresia, but the sound of her voice soon dispelled his uncertainty. He conducted her into the chamber in which Rhodiska was. Theresia lifted up her veil, and discovered her fine black eyes, in which stood the starting tear. She threw herself into the arms of Rhodiska, and spoke to her thus:—

“The mourning dress which I wear, my dearest friend, must inform you that I lament a heavy loss. My mother’s health has been declining ever since the news of my supposed death. The painful emotions which she has felt since my return, the strange and striking circumstances which accompanied my resuscitation and nocturnal appearance at her bedside, coupled with the poignant grief which my sufferings caused her, have finished the derangement of her system, and brought on a disorder which has just conducted her to the grave. There no longer remains to me but distant relations, greedy of my wealth, which they
would

“Your proposal,” replied Rhodiska, “would inspire me with the greatest pleasure, even if I had not conceived for you the tenderest esteem; judge then if I do not eagerly embrace it. Nothing can be more agreeable to me than to pass my days in your society. You have need, however, of all the perfections which I perceive in you, to make me pardon you for your pre-

judices against marriage, which every day forms all the happiness of my life: you must be certain that I am well assured of my husband's heart, by so readily receiving into my house, a person whose beauty is so enchanting."

"We ought to bless our common misfortunes," said Rosomaski, "since they have procured us so charming an acquaintance. Heaven has long since sent me a friend—I am delighted that it has also presented my Rhodiska with one; I am convinced that chance has served her better than her own choice would have done."

Theresia replied, in a tone full of sensibility, to these flattering and affectionate discourses of Rosomaski and Rhodiska. It was then agreed, that, from that moment, Theresia should be received into their house as one of their own family. Full of disinterestedness, Rosomaski and Rhodiska never said a word, nor even thought of a remuneration; but Theresia insisted that the whole of her income, which was very considerable,

considerable, should be added to theirs ; and all parties derived this further advantage from this accession to the family, that the domestics whom Theresia had brought with her, would contribute to render the Castle of Vistulof more cheerful, as well as more secure.

Ludowico was no less satisfied than his friends, to see their society joined by a young stranger, who, in spite of her antipathy to lovers, was characterized by gentleness and amiability. He could not forbear feeling some regret, at thinking that he was obliged to leave Vistulof the next day, to perform a service for Rosomaski. He had just received another letter from Mrs. Vendost, who pressed more than ever for the jewels. Rosomaski was no less eager to remit them to her, but he knew not to whom to confide so valuable a trust, and he himself did not like to leave Rhodiska. Ludowico perceiving his embarrassment, had offered to take them to the town of Jaroslow, to satisfy the impatience of the impor-

fortunate Mrs. Vendost: it was in vain that Rosomaski pressed him to take two of his domestics as a guard; he replied, that whilst he was mounted on a good horse, and furnished with arms, he had nothing to fear. Rosomaski was obliged to let him depart alone, after having made him promise to return with all possible speed.

Rosomaski and Rhodiska were not long in finding out, that by admitting Theresia among them, they had made a more valuable acquisition than they had ever hoped for. To a thousand qualities which rendered her society pleasing. Theresia joined talents which proved that she was no less industrious than entertaining: she excelled in all female works; she was a good musician, and sung with as much expression and taste, as science: her voice, however, had something in it, expressive of her melancholy humour. Endowed with every charm which could make an impression on the heart, she was a rare phenomenon of antipathy to the tender passion. Rhodiska,
who

who played very agreeably on the harpsichord, made a good accompaniment; and Rosomaski, who was willing to enjoy a thorough harmony, engaged a master to come twice a-week, to join them in a concerto, as well as to give him some lessons on that instrument. Thus they never failed of some agreeable little concerts.

Theresia was not yet acquainted with the little economical purposes of a rural life, and Rhodiska took a pleasure in instructing her in them. She intrusted her with the superintendence of her dovec-house; she learned her the art of governing a colony of pigeons, and of maintaining in that republican society, neatness, order, and security. Rosomaski, who was better versed in the art of gardening, taught Theresia to plant and transplant flowers, to vary their shades, and to secure, almost the whole year round, a brilliant parterre, as rich in colours as fruitful in delicious perfumes. Theresia was ecstasied with the mild pleasures, which she enjoyed in the

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company

company of persons who were so well disposed to render her life agreeable; and she experienced no less delight in instructing Paulina in all the accomplishments of which she herself was mistress.

Fifteen days had elapsed since Theresia had fixed her residence in the Castle of Vistulof, and the better she became acquainted with Rosomaski and Rhodiska, the more she applauded herself for the step which she had taken. She was never weary of contemplating the delightful sight of their union; it seemed as if the misfortunes which they had endured, had purified their sentiments and redoubled their mutual tenderness; or rather, that they had always loved one another to the same degree, but had never before experienced so much pleasure, in convincing each other of it: formerly there would rise between, at times, some light clouds, which, however, were soon dissipated, and served only to make their reciprocal affection burst out with greater splendour. In spite of
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the amiable disposition of both, there would be sometimes some trifling difference on points of domestic concerns; but they always terminated to the profit of conjugal affection. Those little inequalities were caused by the difference of their character, which sometimes deranged the equilibrium of their mutual sympathy. Rosomaski, as we have already said, was more quick than Rhodiska: on some occasions he had even cause to reproach himself with a little petulance; but whether the trials, which they had undergone, had rendered still more endearing the happiness of loving each other, or that the presence of a common friend had inspired them with a desire of shewing themselves in the most favourable light, it was certain, that since the arrival of Theresia, they never suffered any thing to escape them which testified the least impatience; on the contrary, they never spoke but in the most affectionate terms. It did not suffice them to be sincerely attached to each other; all their looks, all their words were

were continually assuring them of it. Joy sparkled in the eyes of Rhodiska, when any opportunity offered of anticipating the wishes of her husband. Rosomaski experienced a similar satisfaction, when, by any like attention, he had drawn a smile from Rhodiska. The uncommon beauty of Theresia had excited in him only a cold admiration, and had not rendered less beautiful in his eyes his Rhodiska, whose attractions yielded only in point of youth to those of her friend. The possession of two such amiable children as Paulina and Ladislaus, contributed beyond all to cement their mutual transports. They seemed to say to each other, "Let the grandees of the earth keep their honours and their treasures, we know not how to envy them : we are rich in stores of tenderness.—Love has bestowed on us his most precious gifts, and Hymen makes our cup overflow with his blessings. It is not in the power of misfortunes to overwhelm us, since we shall find in each other an inexhaustible source
of

of consolation—it can only be by separating us that we can be rendered miserable.”

“ O happy they! the happiest of their kind!

Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.

’Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
That binds their peace, but harmony itself,
Attuning all their passions into love,
Where friendship full exerts her softest power.

Perfect esteem. enliven’d by desire
Ineffable, and sympathy of soul :
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence : for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.”

THOMSON.

Theresia had inspired them with an entire confidence : in her presence they did not feel that restraint which a third person almost ever occasions to two lovers, or two married persons excessively attached to each other, and always pleased to speak of their attachment.

attachment. Every thing which propriety permitted them to say in the presence of a young person, replete with good sense and candour, but whose heart was yet a stranger to the mysteries of hymeneal worship, they scrupled not to say before her. Their tender protestations, deposited in the bosom of friendship, appeared to them to derive a double relish. They were the less circumspect, because they suspected that Theresia was very little susceptible of a sentiment, which she did not appear formed to experience: but they were very wide from guessing the true inclinations of Theresia; she did not even know them herself. Whether that her sensibility was of a later growth, or that the sight of the happiness of Rhodiska and Rosomaski, and the enjoyments of maternal affection, had weakened the prepossession which had before armed her against conjugal union, she soon fell into soft reveries. Oftentimes she would surprise herself sighing, and plunged into a melancholy, very unlike that which she

she had before experienced, but much more pleasing: she no longer doubted the change which had operated in her heart; and she was not long in guessing the cause of it, from the following trifling incident.

One day, as Rosomaski was speaking before her of Ludowico, and of the service which he had rendered him, she was seized with an involuntary emotion, and she perceived that the bare mention of Ludowico was sufficient to throw her into a kind of perturbation.

“What means,” said she to herself, “the alteration which I have for some days experienced in myself? Not long since, I shuddered at the thoughts of marriage; all men appeared to me unworthy of fixing the desires of a woman who sighs after true felicity. How is it that my imagination warms, and my ideas are afloat, at the sight of two persons happy in their chains?—why do I delight, in spite of myself, to behold the touching picture of two hearts united by the closest ties of sympathetic relation?”

relation?—There was no man who occupied even a small share of my thoughts—I believed them all perfidious flatterers, and tyrants of our sex—why is it now agreeable to me to hear speak of Ludowico—to think of him? Undoubtedly I owe him gratitude; but is gratitude so active a sentiment?—does it ever trouble our repose? Ah! I can no longer doubt that it is a tenderer passion which I feel for him—I now experience, that sooner or later, all must yield to love, and that the woman who appears insensible, is only she who has not yet met with her subduer. How I blush at my weakness!—to whom shall I dare to make the confession?”

Such were the reflections to which the lovely Theresia gave way. Already she no longer found so many charms in the rural amusements, which Rosomaski and Rhodiska were unceasingly employed in inventing for her: she sought solitude, and was ingenious in inventing pretences to shut herself up alone in her chamber: there
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all her pleasure was to ruminate on the estimable qualities, which at first she had not remarked in Ludowico, but on which the frequent conversations of Rhodiska and Rosomaski had opened her eyes. She had remained several days after the departure of Ludowico, without appearing to expect his return; but, when his absence began to be prolonged beyond the expected time, she could not help feeling some emotions of disquietude, which she was under no little constraint to dissemble. The town of Jaroslow, whither he was gone, was only thirty leagues distant from Vistulof, and it had been calculated that it would take Ludowico six days to go thither, to acquit himself of his commission with Mrs. Vendost, and to return; but just double that number of days had elapsed since his departure. Rosomaski and Rhodiska themselves were not perfectly easy on the score of their friend.

On the thirteenth day, Ludowico made his re-appearance, to the no less joy of
Theresia

Theresia than of Rhodiska and Rošomaski. After he had received the unequivocal marks of their satisfaction, they enquired into the cause which had so long retarded him.

“ My friends, Rhodiska and Rosomaski,” replied he, “ continue to love each other as you do at this present moment. You possess supreme felicity ; it exists in your mutual attachment. I have just been witness of a contrary example, very striking, and very well suited to make me feel all the happiness of your lot. In towns there are very few families in which concord, reciprocal attachment, and true felicity reside ; a thirst after frivolous pleasures, a love of expence, a desire of pleasing and supporting a shining part, are the continual sources of disputes, between the generality of married couples, and the fertile causes of the trials which they are constantly making to deceive each other.—These have been the fatal destroyers of the happiness
of

of Mr. and Mrs. Vendost, as you will hear.

“ The day after my arrival at Jaroslow, which was at a late hour, I presented myself at the door of Mrs. Vendost. They told me that she was not to be seen, and that she had suffered such a lively grief at a late loss, that her health had suffered greatly. I asked her waiting-woman the cause of it, and I had no need of repeating the question, to wind up the alarum of her tongue, which did not cease striking till it had let me into all the secrets of the family. This is the substance of what she related to me, in a manner infinitely more diffuse.

“ Mrs. Vendost is the daughter of a petty tradesman, residing in some little village not far from Cracow; she had been educated in the principles of the purest morality, and she seconded, by a good natural understanding, the sound education which her parents, who were richer in virtues than in the gifts of fortune, had bestowed
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upon her. But they committed a fault in marrying her to a man of great opulence, as vanity soon choaked every good quality which she possessed. This man was Mr. Vendost. She would never have obtained his hand, if he had not had a corporeal defect, which was not well recompensed even by the advantage of a considerable fortune—he was deaf and dumb; as to the rest, he had every quality of heart and mind which could render a husband dear to a wife. He was exempt from that stupidity, which is the usual concomitant of persons in his unfortunate situation; but Mrs. Vendost never loved him. Some months passed over without any interruption of their harmony; but Mrs. Vendost soon began to connect herself with other young females, who idolized dissipation and the tumultuous scenes of high life.—She was tired of a husband who knew only how to love, but could not amuse her with saying pretty nothings. She was not wanting in beauty, and as she was, besides, become very rich, she was soon followed
by

by a train of admirers, who aimed either at her person or her purse. The demon of coquetry hastened her defeat : Mr. Vendost had rivals ; but she conducted herself always with so much precaution and mystery, that if Mr. Vendost could not flatter himself with being adored by his wife, at least he was ignorant that in secret she was guilty of any infidelities. But at last the habit of continuing to disguise every thing from him, was followed by a most fatal event.—She was very near being surprised by her husband, at a moment when she was engaged in a *tête-à-tête* with one of her lovers, who had only just time to throw himself into an adjoining closet, to escape being seen by him. She was not long in inventing a stratagem to send Mr. Vendost out of the way : she met him with an air of concern, and gave him to understand that an unknown person had just brought word that Mr. Novorod was on the point of yielding up his last breath. This Mr. Novorod was a distant relation and intimate friend of Mr. Vendost. his
residence

residence was not at Jaroslow, but at half a league's distance. Mr. Vendost no sooner heard the fatal news, than he uttered an exclamation of grief and surprise, and departed precipitately, in the hopes of embracing his friend before he lost him for ever. In the way to his house, it was necessary that he should cross a ravine at the foot of the hill. It happened that at the moment of Mr. Vendost's passing it, the commandant of Jaroslow was exercising the cannoneers, at about four or five hundred paces from the path which he took, which was a bye one, and a nearer road; they were firing at a mark, and all their balls were directed towards the hill, at the foot of which Mr. Vendost was to pass. He was so employed in thinking on the situation of his departed friend, that he did not distinguish the cannoneers through the thick clouds of smoke which lay between them, and which resembled the mists arising from a marsh, and he could not hear the voice of the centinel, who called to him to go back.—

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He held on his direct course, and in an instant was struck with a ball, which nearly cut him asunder.

“ It was not long before Mrs. Vendost was made acquainted with the melancholy catastrophe of her husband: she was shocked at it, and could not help reproaching herself with the guilty artifice which she had made use of to send him away, and which had proved the indirect cause of his death. This tragical accident was, of itself, sufficient to have struck her with remorse; but her grief was owing to another motive:—She regretted her husband less on his account than her own—she reflected that all the property belonged to Mr. Vendost, and would fall to his own family, if she should happen to lose her only son, who is in a very declining state. This idea, so grating to a woman who doats on wealth, has plunged her into a state bordering upon despair; and she had ordered that, for days to come, no person should be permitted to enter her apartment, nor even to be announced.

“ Though I was impatient,” continued Ludowico, “ to acquit myself of the commission with which I was entrusted, yet I could not obtain access to Mrs. Vendost, till after the expiration of the term which she had fixed for her denial to company, and as I was afraid of confiding the valuable deposit which I brought with me, to any other hands than her own, I thought it more prudent to wait till she chose to be seen.

“ When the time had elapsed, I was introduced into her chamber, where she was reclining in a careless manner on a sofa. I told her, in few words, the cause of my visit, and delivered to her the three diamonds. Before I had acquainted her with my business, she regarded me with a distant and almost repulsive coldness; but the instant she beheld the glittering diamonds, her features brightened up, and joy seemed to have replaced her former grief.

‘ If I had known the object of your visit,’ said she, ‘ I should have excepted you

you with pleasure from the orders I had given to be denied to every one—a measure which the state of my health rendered necessary—Ah! how rejoiced am I to have in my possession these superb jewels, which were presented to us as a small recompence for all our sufferings, and of which Mr. Vendost was going to deprive me by a foolish liberality. The Count Rosomaski and his wife have kept them a long time in their hands, but since they have at last restored them to me, I excuse the delay which has attended the restitution.’

“The avaricious and haughty air, with which she received this deposit, preposessed me against her. I scarcely appeared to listen to what she was saying to me. I hastened to take my leave of her, and to seek at Vistulof hearts truly noble and disinterested.”

CHAP. V.

ROSOMASKI and Rhodiska could not refrain from lamenting the fate of Mr. Vendost, and the fatal errors of his wife. Theresia was ignorant of those qualities which rendered Mr. Vendost so worthy of esteem, and it was not at all surprising that she was not so much touched with his unhappy catastrophe, as her two friends; but this example, at least, sufficed her to know that, in the conjugal union, all the wrong was not always on the side of the husband, and that the reverse was often the case. This reflection caused her to be still more reconciled to marriage, and could but
turn.

turn to the advantage of Ludowico. She had listened with the greatest attention to the account which he had just given, which discovered principles equally pure and just; she felt her esteem for Ludowico increase, and endeavoured in vain to hide it from herself. He who was the object of it, had not the slightest idea of his happiness; this blindness was probably the effect of his extreme bashfulness, and of the persuasion in which he remained, that Theresia would constantly refuse to yield her heart to the dictates of love.

Whilst Ludowico was continuing to relate several other adventures of Mrs. Vendost, which he had heard from her waiting-woman, he was interrupted in his recital by the arrival of a domestic, who said that there was a poor woman at the gate, who desired to speak with the master of the castle—"The porter," added he, "ordered her to go about her business, but she still continues to importune him. She is undoubtedly

some adventurer, and it would not be prudent to admit her."

"I am of a different opinion," replied Rhodiska; "let us be more compassionate—why should we refuse an opportunity of doing good? what can we have to fear from a poor girl?—Let us see her."

Rosomaski, who was always inclined to benevolence, adopted the opinion of Rhodiska. He ordered the servant to tell the porter to admit the woman, and to let her come in to them. She presently made her appearance, which, in her strong, though agreeable features, and lofty stature, resembled that of those women who are often seen in the country, and whose figure bespeaks them habituated to those rude labours which are not above their strength. The fresh colour of her cheeks would have made her pass for a perfect picture of health and contentment, if some tears which stood in her eyes, and the frequent sighs which escaped from her labouring breast, had not bespoke that she
was

was oppressed by some very severe affliction.

“ Good woman,” said Rhodiska, “ you appear in a great deal of trouble ; what are your misfortunes, and what can we do for you ? ”

“ Alas ! Madam,” replied the mendicant, “ my fate is indeed very hard, but it is some alleviation to my wretchedness, that I see your tender hearts disposed to pity. I am named Beatrice, and am a native of Olmutz in Moravia, where my father still lives, without any other fortune than a little dairy, whose profits are just sufficient for his own existence. I had just attained twenty-one years of age, when, by order of government, he was obliged to receive into his house an old serjeant-major : all the inhabitants of Olmutz, at that time, were under the necessity of receiving some soldiers into their houses. The serjeant-major fell very sick, and through humanity, I attended him by day and night, and bestowed on him every care which his situa-

tion required. When his health was fully re-established, he appeared penetrated with gratitude, and imagined that he repaid all my attention by telling me, that he had made a vow to consecrate to me the life which I had been so instrumental in preserving. I received his offer with extreme coldness; but he repeated it before my father, who finding himself burthened with a numerous family, and possessing only very small means of subsisting them, was rejoiced at this opportunity of settling me out of his way. He thought Mr. Blorzeim (that was the name of the serjeant-major) a very advantageous match, as he had not only just come to an inheritance, which was considerable for a man in his condition of life, but also because, on account of his long services, he was going to enjoy the invalid pension attached to his rank. My father accordingly proposed Mr. Blorzeim to me, but I testified my repugnance: he insisted, however, in so strong a manner, that I found I should have no peace unless I obeyed.

I obeyed. As I had always been employed in a laborious life, and had not had leisure to keep company, or to attach myself elsewhere, I carried my obedience so far as to submit to his will; and, in the end, the marriage was accomplished. Mr. Blorzeim brought me into his own country, and to his native place, which was the village of Siroczin, near the town of Jaroslow, where he owned a humble cottage, with some acres of vineyard. All my regret at leaving my father and family were trifling, compared with that I experienced, when I found to what sort of a man I had united myself.

“Not many days after our arrival at the village of Siroczin, he addressed me in the following strange manner—Beatrice, I have made you my wife, but do not imagine that I ever intended to make you my equal: you ought to know that strength is the characteristic of my sex, and weakness that of yours: it is impossible then, that we should ever be upon the same footing.

You owe me an entire submission; you must do whatever I command, or I shall know how to punish your disobedience. I have cast my eyes on you, because I judged you capable of becoming a useful servant. I forewarn you, that I do not understand being contradicted: if I find you constantly obedient and laborious, you will not have to repent it; otherwise, tremble.'

"He pronounced those last words with a tone and air which indeed made me tremble, and which was rendered more frightful by a stature almost gigantic, though his strength was not adequate to his lofty stature. I cannot guess where the wicked Blorzeim could have picked up such execrable principles; but he did not lose time in putting them in practice.

"His circumstances would have permitted him to have hired a servant, but either through avarice, or to enjoy the pleasure of keeping me hard at work, he forced me to perform all the labour of the household.—Whilst he was smoaking his
pipe

pipe at his case, I was obliged to do all the menial drudgery. I alone prepared all his victuals, but was not permitted to sit down at table with him; my place was to stand behind his chair, attentive to all his wants. The same bed indeed held us, but that was only to save the expence of buying another; and I was taught to consider his caresses rather as an honour than an homage to love. He never permitted me to leave the house; he not only imposed on me the task of making and mending all his own linen and cloaths, but those of his neighbours; and he never failed every evening to exact an account of the money which I had received on the preceding day. I should have dearly repented the attempt to retain the smallest share of it to my private use, or to oppose the least resistance to his tyrannical caprices; a shower of blows would have followed my indiscretion. He would often bring home with him his tavern companions, and at such times I was constrained to serve out

wine to this noisy crew, and to hear a thousand insulting apostrophies.—What a part was this to be sustained by a woman, who, although she had not received any regular education, had, at least, proper notions of what was due to the dignity and delicacy of her sex! If at any time I happened not to have shewn sufficient pliability to the will of my husband, I was sure, after the debauch was over, and his comrades gone, to undergo the harshest usage.—When he came home intoxicated, as was frequently the case, if I made the least observation on his situation, I instantly experienced the effects of his brutal disposition. You will scarcely believe, that notwithstanding all the precautions I could possibly take not to irritate him, I was frequently beaten.

“ About sixteen months since, this monster caused me the most painful misfortune: my tears still flow at the recollection of it.—I was pregnant, and I gave myself up to the hope of obtaining from
heaven

heaven a son, who would not resemble his father, and who would bring some alleviation to my deplorable existence: in a gust of passion, the cruel Blorzeim ill-treated me so much, that I had nearly lost my life, with my hopes of becoming a mother.— Since I have been chained to my tyrant, all my days have been only a series of sufferings—if I have not sunk under it, I am only indebted to those notions of piety which have always kept me from yielding to despair. How many times, without the least reason, has he not loaded me with invectives!—If I uttered a shadow of complaint, he would say to me, in an ironical manner —‘ Do you grumble? What, you want to have your own way, do you? Silence, or dread my anger: I know how a woman ought to be governed.’ I became throughout the village an object of compassion; they spoke only of my resignation, and the cruelty of my husband. They said openly, that I ought to apply to the magistrates, to free me from so odious a bondage.—

My

My tyrant was informed that they advised me to quit him, and he said to me, shaking, at the same time, his clenched hand over my head—‘ If you dare to step over the threshold of my door, this hand shall be your death.’

“ I continued to endure the persecutions with which Blorzeim overwhelmed me ; but the public indignation, which he had raised against his unnatural conduct, acquired, day after day, a new degree of violence. The unmarried females of the village of Siroczin, above all the rest, could not forgive him for the doctrine which he preached, and which tended to increase the number of bad husbands. The season of the vintage is not yet quite over, but, at that time, it had only just commenced. The village of Siroczin is surrounded by vineyards, which are all the wealth of that territory. All its inhabitants were busily engaged in this lucrative harvest, and in the amusements which they are accustomed to mingle with their labours : gaiety smiled on every face, and ludicrous pastimes, and
loud

loud peals of laughter, testified the public rejoicings at the season, which was remarkably fine.

“ The young female vintagers saw Mr. Blorzeim pass by, and one of them instantly cried out—‘ Here comes this enemy of our sex—this wicked man, who advises all husbands to ill-treat their wives, and all lovers to become tyrannical husbands ; he himself sets the example, by his cruel treatment of poor Beatrice. Let us convince him that weakness is not always the lot of our sex.’

‘ A droll thought strikes me,’ cried another of them. She made it known to her companions, who heard her with ecstacy, and agreed to second her. The whole groupe then surrounded and seized Blorzeim.

‘ This instant repeat,’ cried the proposer of the scheme, ‘ the confession which I am going to dictate to you.—Declare that in seeking to decry our sex, you scandalize yourself, since you slander your own mo-

ther, and vilify your nurse. Agree that women form the most interesting half of the human race. Take in our presence a solemn oath that you will never again misuse Beatrice, and that you will henceforth regard her as an estimable companion, and not as your slave.'

"Mr. Blorzeim made no other reply to this proposal, than menacing vociferations and horrid oaths.

'Come along then,' said the same vintager who had made the proposal to him; 'let us do ourselves justice on this stubborn man.'

"In an instant they threw him headlong into an immense vat, into which torrents of wine were pouring out from the press. Blorzeim and his cloaths were dyed of a purple colour, with his struggling about in the foaming liquid, to liberate himself from this bacchanalian bath. His convulsive motions excited the laughter of the vintagers. One of them cried out—
'It is no bad place for one who is so fond
of

of the juice of the grape ; he may quench his thirst there very well : besides, it will save him the trouble of filling his glass so often.'

" At length, one of them, more prudent than the rest, observed that this pastime, if continued any longer, might be attended with fatal consequences. They were alarmed, and held out to Blorzeim one end of a stick, with which they stirred up the liquid to make it ferment ; he seized it with the utmost eagerness, and they drew him out to the edge of the vat, which he climbed over with surprising agility, for a man of his years.

" No sooner had he touched dry ground than the peals of laughter recommenced. A more grotesque sight could not be imagined, than to behold the redness of anger and the purple of the wine blended together on his face ; the juice of the grape flowing from his disordered hair, and running down his cloaths in streamlets. In the utmost fury he endeavoured to strike her

her whom he looked upon as the instigatress of the insult which he had received ; but, in an instant, two stout vintagers held his uplifted arm, and cried out—

‘ The vapours of the wine have disordered his brain—we must now make him work off what he has swallowed ’

“ As they uttered these words, they seized him round the waist, and threw him into a hogshead, which stood near the place, without a head, in readiness to receive the wine. Their companions joined them with loud acclamations, and helped them to head in the cask. All Blorzeim’s efforts were useless against theirs, and the hogshead became a prison of a new kind. There was only the bunghole for him to draw the air. The mischievous vintagers then began to roll the hogshead with its contents, making, at the same time, a thousand antic gestures, and singing verses of their own composing, suited to the scene they were acting.

“ After having in this manner rolled the
hogshead

hogshead to a considerable distance, they loosened several of the hoops, and ran off. Blorzeim, who had perceived that the vehicle had lost its round-about motion, and that the staves began to fall asunder, gave it a hearty kick, and got from under the wreck of his prison in a perfect rage. He looked round to see the authors of his torments, but they had all disappeared.

“ During these laughable scenes, I was at home, according to custom. Presently one of the vintagers, who was the most affected by my misfortunes, and who had taken a lead in the revenge exercised upon my husband, ran in to acquaint me with all the circumstances which she had witnessed, for I had not the least idea of their intentions till after they had put them into execution. I replied that I was extremely sorry they had taken such methods of punishing Mr. Blorzeim, and observed that they would only tend to aggravate my sufferings, by irritating the fury of my husband against me. I was speaking thus, when

when the door was burst open with the utmost violence, and I beheld my husband, with mingled emotions of mirth and terror. As he was fully persuaded that it was at my solicitation he had been buffeted and ill-treated, he ran to make me feel all the weight of his rage, which he had not been able to vent upon the young vintagers.—His looks, his gestures, all announced a fury wound up to madness—his hair wet, and plaistered on his face, his cloaths stiffened and distilling wine, gave him at once an appearance frightful and burlesque.

“As soon as he saw me, he exclaimed, as he beat the air with a knotty stick which he held in his hand—‘Wretch, you shall pay dearly for the outrages which you have been the means of raising against me.’

“He was then preparing to fall upon me, when the young vintager stepped before me, and stopt him in his furious career, by catching him in her arms. I cannot describe to you my terror, at what I had to dread from his phrenzy. I might
expire

expire under his blows, or at least be maimed by them, all the rest of my life. I did not think proper to wait for them.—Whilst he was endeavouring to disengage himself from the young vintager, I flew out of the house, and continued running, without once stopping to look behind me. Imagining that Blorzeim was in pursuit of me, I did not cease from running, till I was a quarter of a league distant from the village of Siroczin, and my breath quite exhausted. I looked round, but could discern nothing of my husband, and then began to reflect on what part I had to take. The thoughts of the barbarities which I should have to suffer, if I returned to my husband's house, would not permit me to think of going back to him, and I could fix upon no other place of refuge than my father's house. Though I had only some few pieces of small money about me, yet I resolved to undertake the journey to Olmutz.

“ On the third day of my march, I had
entirely

entirely exhausted all my poor means, and had no other resource left, than the benevolence of persons whom my misfortunes might interest. Hitherto I have not failed to meet with well-disposed persons, who have taken compassion on me: may I have the same good fortune till I arrive at the asylum, where the compassionate tears and the succour of my family await me! Madam," continued the mendicant, "I read on your countenance, which is the seat of goodness, that you would reproach yourself with suffering me to pass the night in the desert spots which surround this castle; and that you will deign to grant me hospitality, until, a little relieved from my excessive fatigues, I may again resume my journey."

CHAP. VI.

RHODISKA and Rosomaski had not heard, without strong emotions of compassion, the narrative of the mendicant : whilst she was speaking, they looked at each other, as if they would have said—" We are well aware that all couples united in marriage are not alike happy ; sometimes the fault is in the wife, sometimes the husband, sometimes both.—If there exists light, coquettish, and imprudent women, there are also an equal number of unjust and tyrannical husbands ; for a Mrs. Vendost there will always be found a Blorzeim, particularly in the lower classes of society."

Theresia,

Theresia, after the recital of the misfortunes of Beatrice was finished, exclaimed, with a seeming exultation—"Well, is not what you have just heard a justification of my sentiments?"

She was going on, to insist upon her triumph; but turning her eyes from Beatrice, who had excited and attracted all her attention during her narrative, towards the happy and amiable couple before her, and on Ludowico, whose countenance appeared to discover his sorrow that so bad a cause should have so fair an advocate, the sinister reflections which had presented themselves to her mind vanished, and left her without knowing how to finish what she had begun.

Rosomaski instantly ordered some refreshment to be placed before Beatrice, who, from the eagerness with which she fell to it, might have been supposed to have kept strict Lent for several days past. Rhodiska and Rosomaski beheld her devour her victuals, with that satisfaction which
benevolent

benevolent hearts always derive from the sight of those whom they render happy.

When Beatrice had finished her repast, she begged that she might be permitted to lie down in some corner, to enjoy that repose which her excessive fatigue rendered so necessary to her. Rhodiska had anticipated her wishes, by privately ordering a bed to be prepared for her, in one of the upper stories of the castle. Beatrice then thanked her benefactors in suitable terms, and followed the domestic, who waited to conduct her to her chamber.

The shades of night had already bedimmed the horizon, and the clock had given warning that it was nine in the evening: the inhabitants of Vistulof then sat down to table in their turn, and during their repast, the conversation was lively and animated—at others, more solid and sentimental. Ludowico attracted a large portion of their attention, by the humorous details which he had heard from the waiting-woman, of the conduct of Mrs. Vendost. When the desert was brought in,

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they gave a loose to gaiety, because they were then more at liberty. All the domestics had withdrawn, to take their last repast for the day. Rosomaski requested Theresia to favour them with a song, and, animated by the presence of Ludowico, she gave them one full of expression.—Ludowico had his eyes fixed upon her, and appeared quite absorbed in a pleasing melancholy. Just as she had finished the air, all the company leaped up from their seats, at the sound of a shrill whistle, which appeared to proceed from the outside of the walls. As the sounds were exactly similar to those which Rosomaski and Ludowico had heard in the forest, when they seized Zokalef and Dorothea, they guessed their meaning portended some new mischief; and the ladies, who had their eyes fixed on them, derived no comfort from their looks full of anxiety.

Rosomaski perceived it, and desired them not to be frightened; perhaps there was nothing in the sounds which they had heard; but, at all events, they would arm themselves,

themselves, and prepare to protect them. He left the room to get his arms—but in a short time, he entered with his mouth half open. In vain did they expect to hear what he was going to say; but his wild looks sufficiently explained that some horrid affair was the cause of his silence.

“My dear Rosomaski,” cried Rhodiska, “what has happened? Have we any new misfortune to bewail? Tell me; do not keep me in suspense.”

“Alas!” replied Rosomaski, gasping, as if for life, “our son—our Ladislaus.”

“What of him?” cried Rhodiska.

“Is carried off—we shall never see him again,” added Rosomaski.

At this instant Zerbetta entered the room, and with looks no less expressive of horror than those of Rosomaski, informed them that she left the little Ladislaus fast asleep, to go to her supper, and that when she returned to the chamber, he was no where to be found. One of the windows was left open, and a rope ladder was suspended from it to a balcony, which was

only at the distance of five or six feet from the garden.

Rhodiska had no sooner heard this dreadful intelligence, than she uttered a piercing cry of grief and despair, and fell senseless on the floor. Another domestic then entered the room, and said that the mendicant had disappeared.

“The moments are precious,” cried Rosomaski; “let us hasten to the garden, and separate, to search every corner of it. Perhaps we may yet be time enough to cut off their retreat.”

Whilst Theresia and Zerbetta were giving their assistance to Rhodiska, who had not recovered from her swoon, Rosomaski and Ludowico opened the gate which led into the garden, and entered it, accompanied by four domestics, who were all armed with sabres and fire-arms. The lighted torches, which they carried each in one hand, scarcely sufficed to direct them in the midst of the darkness, which had never been exceeded. That night, the moon had refused to lend to the earth the
pale

pale light of her silvery disk: no star illumed the horizon with its vacillating brilliancy; every object was lost under the black shade of darkness. Rosomaski, at the head of two domestics, directed his course on the eastern side of the garden.—Ludowico, followed by the other two, searched every part of the western side. Rosomaski cast his inflamed eyes upon every object which presented itself in his road, and seemed to interrogate each tree, each plant, as he passed them. Sometimes he stopped, and listened with the utmost attention, but hearing nothing, he hastened on.

As he approached a part of the walls, against which were some espaliers, one of the domestics cried out—“Hark, Sir! I hear a noise.”

Rosomaski listened, and distinguished the voices of some persons, who were laughing as they traversed the plain on the opposite side of the wall; at that instant the other domestic, bending down his torso

towards the ground, remarked in one spot the marks of footsteps, and a quantity of leaves, which appeared to have been detached from one of the espaliers by some violence. Rosomaski then no longer doubted that this was the spot where, by means of another rope-ladder, the ravishers of his son had climbed over the wall. The three whistles were the signal concerted between the pretended mendicant and her accomplices, to throw the ladder over the wall, and assist her to escape with her prey.

“Ah, the monsters!” exclaimed Rosomaski, “they were making sport of the grief which they knew they should occasion me, as they marched through the plain with my innocent infant.—Why can I not dart over this high wall, which has opposed no barrier to crime, but prohibits the generous effort of paternal love?—why can I not this instant overtake those vile wretches, snatch my son from them, and immolate them to my just vengeance, or perish in the attempt? Let us run to
open

open the gate which fronts the principal avenue: we shall shorten the way which will lead us to our enemies."

He ran towards the gate, and the domestics followed at some little distance behind, unable to keep pace with his impetuous haste, which despised the darkness and intervening dangers. He had reached it before he reflected that he had not the key, which was always hung up in the hall of the castle.

"Oh Heaven!" cried he, shedding tears of rage, "the time will be past—my son is for ever lost to me."

His domestics observed, at that moment, a horrible change in him: all the muscles of his face were contracted—his teeth grated—all his limbs were agitated by convulsive motions—and his eyes were haggard: he groaned, and uttered some inarticulate sounds, which announced delirium. His domestics shrugged up their shoulders, in astonishment and commiseration. Ludowico, who was then at a little distance, no

sooner beheld the light of their torches, than he ran to meet them. . He observed that the body of Rosomaski was struck with an universal tremor, whilst his cheeks were inflamed, and his eyes appeared like two other lighted torches. He hastened to get him conveyed back to the castle, where he caused him to be put to bed. He would not acquaint Rhodiska, who began to recover her senses, and demanded her son with floods of tears, with the situation of her husband. Leaving Rosomaski to the care of some of the female domestics, he lost no time in endeavouring to accomplish the object which was dearest to the heart of his friend. He again commenced his pursuit, with the four domestics who had assisted to search the garden, and traversed the adjoining plains and forest, in spite of the darkness of the night, which opposed his success, and rendered more dangerous the ambushes with which he might be threatened.

Impatient to restore Ladislaus to the arms
of

of his friends, he braved all dangers, and followed the route which he guessed the ravishers might have taken. He did not hesitate to plunge himself into that vast and dreary forest, which embraced the Castle of Vistulof round about, to the distance of several leagues: all his efforts, however, were useless; he beheld only trees, whose black trunks and thick foliage redoubled the horrors of darkness; he heard only the hissing of the north wind, which bent the groaning summits of the forest, and seemed to bear a response to the screams of the birds of night. After having wandered in vain, during the space of three hours, he reflected that his longer absence from the Castle of Vistulof might perhaps expose his friends to new dangers: he hastened back, and found Rhodiska fully recovered; but it was only to make her more sensible of all the extent of her wretchedness, which was still sharpened by the afflicting condition of her husband.

Rosomaski continued to exhibit all the

tokens of delirium, and the fever which consumed him had abated nothing of its violence. Rhodiska, seated at his bedside, held her face reclined over his, and viewed him with looks of inexpressible grief and despair. Theresia, with her eyes bathed in tears, partook of her sorrows, but dared not attempt to offer any consolation, lest, by some misplaced reflections, she might produce the contrary effect.

How dreadful was the task of Ludowico, to announce to Rhodiska that he had not been able to discover the least traces of the ravishers of the little Ladislaus! To soften these melancholy tidings, he told her that he did not despair to find the retreat of the banditti, so soon as the return of daylight should enable him to recommence the pursuit. Rhodiska could only reply to him by this exclamation, which was interrupted by her sobs—"My dear son!—the inhuman wretches have certainly killed him."

Theresia could not refrain from bestow-
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ing some marks of attention upon Ludowico, when she perceived the wet and dirty condition in which he had returned. He informed her that, in the midst of the forest and the darkness, he had tumbled into a brook, and had several times waded up to his knees through the morasses.—Theresia advised him to lose no time in changing his cloaths, and observed, that after so tedious a pursuit, he must stand in need of repose. Rhodiska enforced this observation; but it was not without difficulty that they prevailed upon Ludowico to retire to his apartment. If he had followed his own inclination, he would not have left his friends for a moment; he consented, however, to throw himself into the arms of sleep, upon Theresia's representation that, without it, he would be very ill qualified to renew his search on the ensuing day.

Scarcely had it made its appearance, before Ludowico mounted his horse, and left the Castle of Vistulof. He refused to take

a single domestic with him, that he might not diminish the number of the defenders of his friends.

As soon as Rhodiska was informed that Ludowico had departed to renew his pursuit, she felt some ray of hope arising in her breast; but it was soon overshadowed by the remembrance of the atrocities of their invisible enemy. She had remained by the side of her husband till the morning's crow of the cock had announced the disappearance of the shade of night—grief kept her awake; but the excess of her agitation had at length constrained her to yield to sleep. She saw, with joy, the light of day return, and bring with it security. Her first care was to enquire into the situation of Resomaski. Theresia and Zerbetta, with the assistance of a domestic, had watched him all the night, during which he had not ceased to be devoured by the most violent transports, except two or three hours, when fatigue seemed to have overpowered him, and he fell into a slumber. But his awak-
ing

ing had been the signal of a new delirium, still more alarming than the former: he appeared to have entirely lost the use of his reason; he no longer recognised any of the persons who surrounded him—not even his tender Rhodiska, who incessantly loaded him with her caresses, in the hope of reanimating his sensibility, and groaned at seeing that he survived his tenderness for her.

“How much am I to be pitied!” said she. “In the same moment I have lost my son and the heart of my husband—Rosomaski no longer knows me—he sees me with indifference—he has ceased to exist for me; but his Rhodiska will never cease to live for him.”

She then caressed him again, but he (his eyes distracted and wandering) did not seem to know her: he pointed with his finger towards the foot of the bed, in the attitude of a man who beholds near him a precipice which threatens to swallow him up.

The

The next day, Rosomaski became more composed, and Rhodiska continued to bestow on him the same caresses and the same attentions. The day following, he had some lucid intervals: the fever abated insensibly, and at length wholly gave way. He recovered his reason, but remained in so weakened a state, that it was impossible he could rise, or take any solid nourishment. Rhodiska contemplated, with satisfaction, this happy change; she thought that her husband was cured, because she saw him smile—she turned all her desires, and all her thoughts, towards what might contribute to his convalescence—she herself undertook the entire management of him, with the advice of Irvan, who, during his long solitary abode in the forest, had chiefly employed himself in collecting plants and herbs, and making experiments of their virtues and qualities. Rhodiska would not permit any other person to do any of those offices which were requisite in Rosomaski's condition.—no beverage would

would have been salutary, if not administered by her hand. In his presence she dissembled her affliction as much as she could, for fear of augmenting his despondency ; she sought every method of diverting him ; and as all the violent symptoms had disappeared, and his disorder had assumed the character of langour, she thought to contribute to his re-establishment, by procuring him whatever might, if for a few moments only, produce a calm in his mind.

Theresia exerted herself to second the efforts of her friend, and rouse the languishing existence of her Rosomaski. Penetrated with admiration of the virtues of Rhediska, she contemplated with delight the consolations of those two persons, who found a resource, even in the midst of misfortunes, in their mutual tenderness.— She had seen enough, to convince her that a marriage, grounded on merit and mutual affection, was a benefit of heaven ; and this idea brought her insensibly to think

on Ludowico, for whom her esteem increased every day ; she was grieved that so cruel an event should have occasioned his departure ; and she could not help feeling a strong disquietude, that alone, and without any other support than his own courage, he should have undertaken to pursue the ravishers of the little Ladislaus.

CHAP. VII.

AFTER several days had elapsed, Ludowico again returned to Vistulof, one morning before breakfast. This model of friends had made the most extensive inquiries, to assure himself of the fate of the little Ladislaus, and to discover the retreat of his ravishers.

ravishers. He had run through all the environs of the Castle of Vistulof, to the distance of eight leagues; and had requested the magistrates of Cracow, Zabno, and of all the towns and villages in that circle, to cause inquiries to be set on foot: but all his pains had not been crowned with any success. The instant Rhodiska saw Ludowico return alone, she burst into tears, and exclaimed—"Alas! there are no longer any hopes—I shall never behold my son again. The poor infant has been sacrificed."

"I hope not," replied Ludowico: "my object in returning was to know whether you had heard any tidings in my absence—to-morrow I shall set off again, and extend my enquiries to a much larger circle."

"Would it not be better," said Theresia, "that you remained here, to console your friend Rosomaski, who certainly is in the utmost need of it, and to secure the castle? I am not without great hopes that the dear Ladislaus will not be lost to his mother :

mother: but I should think, that the publicity which has been given to this event, and the notice which has been transmitted to all the magistrates of the environs, ought to suffice to bring about the discovery of the perpetrators of this crime, and the place of their concealment."

In making this observation, Theresia wished to prevent another absence of Ludowico, whom unforeseen accidents had always kept at a distance from her, almost ever since she had known him. But as Rhodiska, like a drowning person catching at straws, encouraged Ludowico in his intention, and eagerly seized the occasion of engaging him to renew his pursuit, Theresia dissembled her chagrin, and was silent. Ludowico, on his part, expressed his readiness to go to any part of the world to serve his friends. Theresia, to whom the fate of Ludowico was become highly interesting, proposed to him not to set off again without being accompanied by at least one of the domestics. She was so
strenuous

strenuous in this proposition, that she blushed at thinking the expression of her regard might have betrayed the secret of her heart. Rhodiska, who was restrained by no such motive, warmly insisted that for this time, Ludowico should not depart without taking with him one of the domestics; and Theresia was somewhat reconciled, by knowing that he would be guarded by a robust, faithful, and courageous person.

Before Ludowico remounted his horse, he went to take leave of Rosomaski, who had just awaked from a doze, into which he had dropped on a sofa before the fire, during the discourse between Theresia, Rhodiska, and Ludowico. As soon as he beheld his friend seated at a little distance from him, he leaned forward, threw his arms about his neck, and shed a fresh torrent of tears. He then took one of his hands, which he grasped, and pronounced these words—"Ah! my tender friend!" After which he was unable to utter any
more

more but confused sounds. But what language could be so forcibly eloquent as such a silence! his tears were not extracted by grief, but, for want of voice, they were the organs of gratitude.

Ludowico was sensibly affected by these precious evidences of his friend's attachment. When Rosomaski's emotions were somewhat calmed, he said to Ludowico, with a tone weakened by his languishing state—"The frightful decay of my health gives me only the expectation of a speedy death: I am going to require of you a last proof of your friendship, but I do not require its performance till I shall exist no longer. You ought to have sufficient confidence in me, to be sure that I shall desire nothing which may endanger either your honour or your happiness. Take this—(as he said these words, he delivered into Ludowico's hands a little packet, which was carefully sealed)—"Take this, and swear, that soon after my death, you will execute what I request of you, and which,
in

in proper time, will be fully explained, by the writing which I have delivered to you : it is not to be opened, however, till I shall have breathed my last; and I recommend to you to bury in profound secrecy, till that epoch, the deposit which I have just confided to you."

"Dear Rosomaski," replied Ludowico, "why should you give yourself up to such melancholy ideas? Death is not so close to your elbow as you appear to imagine. I should never speak to you with so serene an air, if I did not hope and expect to see you speedily re-established. Nothing presages that you are to die before me, since we are both of an age. But I will suppose, for a moment, that I may be destined to the horror of surviving you,—What is the nature of your request?—explain it to me, and trust to my discretion. If it be a benefit which you reserve for me, permit me to refuse it; the trifling services which I have been able to render you, have been overpaid by the friendship
ship

ship which you have bestowed on me, and by the pleasure I have received from proving my attachment to you. If it be any task which you would impose on me, to give me an opportunity of evincing my religious respect for your memory, doubt not of my accepting the obligation, whatever sacrifice it may require of me. But why this mystery?—Can you distrust the heart of your friend?—Do you think that it can be more firmly engaged by an oath, than by its inviolable attachment towards you?”

Here Ludowico observed that his refusal caused an alteration in all the features of Rosomaski, who drew breath with difficulty. He discerned that he should contend in vain against the desires of his friend, and he took the packet, pronouncing the words—“I swear to fulfil your wishes dictated in this packet, be they what they may.”

Rosomaski's face beamed with a transitory pleasure, and, at that moment, a servant entered to announce that his horse
and

and his attendant were waiting for him. Ludowico again embraced his friend, and retired. He endeavoured to disguise the emotions which he felt, at leaving his friend in this lamentable situation; and quitting the Castle of Vistulof, he left Rhodiska and Theresia a prey to chagrin, whose causes were very different.

Rhodiska had been guided by her maternal feelings, when she had engaged Ludowico to set out upon new enquiries; but after having reflected that his absence had deprived the Castle of Vistulof of one of its bravest defenders, she could not refrain from some uneasiness. She repented it more than ever one evening after supper, about six days after his departure, when they heard a dreadful explosion, like that produced by those artificial fire-works, in which the saltpetre, compressed by force, bellows furiously as it bursts its prison.

“ Oh Heaven!” cried Theresia, trembling, “ the wretches who persecute you have mined the castle, to bury you under
its

its smoaking ruins—Fly from this abode of death.”

“ My dear friend,” replied Rhodiska, who was not easily intimidated, “ we shall only augment our dangers, by suffering ourselves to give way to terror.”

As she pronounced these words, she mounted to the second story, followed by Theresia. Rhodiska opened one of the windows, which commanded the adjacent country. Her eyes were presently attracted towards four isolate oaks, which bordered a plain at about a hundred paces from the enclosure of the castle, and which appeared resplendent with fires, whose brilliancy the darkness of the night redoubled. An immense square, suspended to the branches of these trees, and illuminated in the centre by an artificial light, formed, by means of the oily matter with which it was glossed over, what is termed a transparency.—Rhodiska and Theresia read, with a terrific surprise, the following words, traced in characters of fire :—

“ *Tremble,*

“Tremble, family whom I abhor—I have devoted you to death: but before you perish, you will continue to suffer inexpressible anguish. You can discover me no where, and yet I am ever at hand to strike you. Your torments are my delight—my rage is insatiable—my means of torture are without bounds.—I intend that my vengeance shall become an eternal monument.—Tremble!”

At the reading of this menacing inscription, Theresia was near fainting; a cold dew distilled from every pore. Rhodiska said to Theresia—“Let us arm ourselves with courage; we will remain no longer in this castle, whose abode is too dangerous. Rosomaski begins to gain strength: we have both agreed to remove our residence to Cracow, and we will take every necessary precaution to arrive there in safety. Nothing can equal the savage barbarity of our invisible enemy, but we shall find means to escape his rage.”

Whilst Rhodiska was speaking thus, the
VOL. II. G domestics,

domestics, who, at the noise of the explosion, had seized their arms, came to declare their readiness to explore the exterior of the castle, and to combat the banditti, who sought to destroy their master and his family. Rhodiska applauded their zeal and intentions ; but Theresia objected that it would be more prudent to entrench themselves within the castle, and to wait the enemy's attack with unshaken firmness. Rhodiska ran to consult Rosomaski, who was not yet sufficiently recovered to put himself at the head of his domestics. He approved their design. They quitted the castle, and directed their march towards that side, whence the explosion had proceeded.

Rhodiska, Theresia and Rosomaski, placed themselves at a window, and continued to fix their eyes on the transparency, which the hands of their enemies had, under cover of the night, displayed on the branches of the four oaks. Rosomaski had armed himself with a gun, as had also Rhodiska, who

who was resolved to defend herself and her husband to the last extremity, if circumstances should require it.

The domestics had scarcely got beyond the precincts of the castle, before a second explosion took place, still louder than the former. It produced a large volume of flames, which spread abroad, and presently consumed the transparent work, and the sparkling characters which were imprinted on it. The intrepid groupe did not retreat, but pushed on towards the spot, where they found only some pieces of paper, half consumed by the fire, and still smoking at the foot of the oaks, which a damp and rainy season had alone preserved from being involved in the conflagration—they neither saw nor heard any person. It was easy to conjecture that the characters of this terrific inscription had been lighted by some phosphoric composition, that the two explosions which had been heard had been prepared some time before-hand, and that the moment of

their detonation had been calculated, in the same manner as an ingenious engineer calculates, from the length of his match, the time which a bomb will take before it explodes.

As soon as the domestics had surveyed all the adjoining space, without meeting any enemy, they returned to the Castle of Vistulof, where they found Rhodiska and Rosomaski employed in concerting the means of going to Cracow without danger. Rhodiska said to Rosomaski—"Our persecutor must have many resources at his disposal, to think himself secure in displaying so much audacity. Undoubtedly he imagines that he has it in his power to destroy us when he will, since he erects so many batteries to procure himself the inhuman pleasure of congealing us with fear. Without being pusillanimous, we ought to endeavour to provide for our safety. Why have we depended so much on our courage?—if we had been more timid and distrustful, we should not have admitted into our
house

house the ravisher and, perhaps, the murderer of our child. We ought not to forget, however, that we have still another child, no less dear, left to us—For her sake, if not for our own, let us quit this abode of danger, and seek for shelter from this invisible enemy, who, perhaps, if known, we should no longer dread.”

Rosomaski approved the arguments of his wife, and on the ensuing morning he dispatched a messenger, to desire an acquaintance, in Cracow, to hire a lodging for him ; and he wrote to the magistrate of Zabno, to request him to furnish him with a guard of four soldiers.

CHAP. VIII.

BOTH those wishes were promptly complied with. Some days after, Rosomaski was informed that ready-furnished apartments had been taken for him. He was impatient to quit Vistulof, a residence which had become odious to him since the loss of his son. The guard which he had solicited being arrived, he hastened his departure. Himself, his wife, Theresia, and Paulina, seated themselves in a berlin; the two domestics belonging to Theresia followed behind; after all, came a wagon, in which this fugitive and persecuted family had placed their most valuable effects.

fects. The four soldiers marched two on each side of the escort. During the whole of their journey nothing happened to give the least alarm to the travellers. They arrived at Cracow before the decline of the day ; and there was still light enough for them to view the abode which their acquaintance had chosen for them. They perceived, with great satisfaction, that it was situated in one of the finest quarters of the city, and that it presented all the conveniences which they could promise themselves, in so large and populous a place. They congratulated each other on no longer inhabiting an abode which teemed with ambuscades, and did not permit them to enjoy a tranquil night. Theresia especially was rejoiced to reside in a city, whose immense totality of population contributed to the safety of each individual.— She would not have suffered her friends to have gone into any other house than her own ; but, in the expectation of pass-

ing her time at Vistulof, she had let it for a long term.

Rhodiska and Rosomaski were the more resigned to leave Vistulof, as their daughter Paulina, who now touched on her thirteenth year, required that polish of her education, of which Rhodiska had laid a solid foundation. They had for some time entertained thoughts of sending her to one of the schools in that famous city; but upon reflection, they were better pleased to have her instructed there, under their own eyes.

Rosomaski and Rhodiska, on their arrival at Cracow, had formed the design of not mixing with the brilliant circles of that rich and populous city. Solitude has always charms for afflicted hearts. Theresia, naturally thoughtful and melancholy, had signified to them that she would conform herself exactly to their retired mode of living. But they had in vain promised themselves to remain unknown and unnoticed; their reputation had reached Cracow

cow before themselves. The most considerable persons of that city desired to become acquainted with those, an account of whose virtues and unjust sufferings had excited in them so much admiration of the former, and detestation of the authors of the latter. The eagerness with which their company was sought after, became a great expence to them. In great cities, a considerable fortune is required to keep many connexions. Whilst Rhodiska and Rosomaski had resided in the country, they had, without being any burthen to their farmers, been able to maintain a state bordering on splendour; but in changing their abode, they soon found that they had changed their circumstances.

At the Castle of Vistulof they had in their service five men and three women, including the domestics of Theresia among the former, besides the old porter and the gardener: they kept a carriage and four horses, beside saddle-horses. A moderate revenue sufficed them to support such a
G. 5 household;

household; because, besides having the castle and garden rent-free, they found more than they could consume in the productions with which the farmers paid them their rents: but those advantages had not followed them to Cracow. If they had wished to have maintained the same equipage there as at Vistulof, they must have incurred expences infinitely beyond their income, and have oppressed their tenants to make good the deficiency. The latter they would never have put into execution; and were, therefore, too prudent to affect a stile of living, which did not suit their circumstances.

For these reasons they hired only two domestics, besides those of Theresia; they disposed of their carriage and horses; so that they were reduced to make use of a hired coach, whenever unfavourable weather, or the length of the way, prevented them from going on foot. If they so soon took the resolution of diminishing their expences, it was only because it appeared

peared to them less painful and more prudent to condemn themselves at first to economy, than to expose themselves at last to the mortification of falling from their former magnificence. Their modest discourse and carriage, and the simplicity of their manners, were an addition to the pleasure which all who visited them took in their company: but the more visits they received, the more they had to return.

It was to have been expected, as this amiable and unfortunate couple flattered themselves, that they had anchored in a safe port, where they would have been sheltered from all storms; but vain were these expectations and flattering hopes — The hurry of arranging their new household, and of paying and receiving visits, had not attracted Rosomaski's and Rhodiska's attentions from their friend Ludowico; but if they were uneasy at his staying beyond the time which might have been supposed necessary for the dispatch

of the affair which had called him, Theresia was almost secretly distracted; and, to heighten her misery, she dared not to make known the situation of her labouring breast, even to her dear friend Rhodiska. Her melancholy increased so fast, as to occasion Rhodiska to take notice of it; but she passed it off, by saying that it was occasioned by her return to Cracow, every corner of which could not fail to put her in mind of her dear mother.

Rosomaski and Rhodiska had now enjoyed a calm of some weeks, which would have been unruffled, but for their anxiety on account of Ludowico; of whom they had not even heard any tidings. The demon, their invisible enemy, envious of their felicity, however, soon began to let them know that he was neither asleep, nor softened by the exile into which he had driven them. Every day brought accounts from Vistulof and Dorbalec, that Rosomaski had no sooner left the former place, than, as if to cut off all supplies from being

ing transmitted to them at Cracow, the agents of his enemy, like so many raging fiends from the infernal regions, ravaged the domains belonging to those two castles by night, and scarcely suffered a family to sleep, without danger of being suffocated under the smoaking ruins of their habitations.—Whatever remained of their harvests for the use of their own families, after paying their rent, was all destroyed—their cattle killed or maimed—and not a night passed over their heads, that the ensuing morning did not discover the traces of these devastators, marked with fire and blood. The only persons who enjoyed the least degree of security, were those who were left in the care of the two castles; and even those persons were harrassed and almost fainting under their nocturnal watches, without which, none dared to permit himself to take any repose.

“What is to be done now?” said Rosomaski to Rhodiska. “Our insatiate enemy is not contented with having driven us
5 from

from our home, but he is resolved to doom us to misery and want. What resource is there left us?—oh that I had but the monster this moment within my grasp! But of what avail can be wishes, when all the efforts of myself and my friends, and all the scrutinies of the police, have been ineffectual to discover his retreat? Why cannot this dreadful storm buffet me, and burst on my head only?—why must my tender Rhodiska and her innocent children be made to abide its worst pelting? How readily would I grasp this savage barbarian, and plunge myself with him into the fiery gulph of *Ætna* or *Vesuvius*, so that I could, by my own death, secure tranquillity to those beloved objects!”

“My dearest Rosomaski,” said Rhodiska, “true fortitude is shewn better by a patient endurance of misfortune, than by a rash contempt of danger. Let us evince to the world, that the courage which they give us credit for is of the genuine stamp, and not of that spurious kind which is only foolish

foolish' and blind temerity. Whilst Vistulof and Dorbalec shall belong to us, our enemy will never cease to devastate them. Those estates will bring us in nothing, but may bring destruction upon the tenants. Let us dispose of them, and they will no sooner have another proprietor, than this invisible fiend will have no grounds for any further malice, and the tenants will rest in security. It will be undoubtedly grating to us to dispose of the habitations of our ancestors for generations past; but we cannot inhabit them, nor will any person be able to continue in them whilst we are the proprietors. Is it not better to see them in other hands, than to behold them become a desert? Let us sell them, and the money will secure us a comfortable living, beyond the ravages of our foe."

Theresia strongly enforced this advice, and endeavoured to console these afflicted persons, by declaring, that however their circumstances might be reduced, they should share

share her fortune, as a brother and a sister would have partaken of it. - Rosomaski rose up instantly, and threw himself at the feet of Theresia with so much violence, that Rhodiska began to be alarmed lest his delirium was returning again; but he uttered the following words with so much calmness, as served to restore something like tranquillity to her own bosom.

“Generous Theresia! I will no longer despair. One such friend as you are to my Rhodiska, is worth all the trials we have endured, or may yet have to endure. I will arm myself with patience, which is the only weapon of defence left me against an enemy, who does not seem to be a human being. As you and Rhodiska are of opinion we should sell our estates, I readily acquiesce. Be yourself our banker: shield my Rhodiska and our only remaining child from the misery of want, and may Heaven be to you what you have been to us!”

“Nay,” cried Theresia, raising him, “you neither do; nor will owe me any obligations.”

obligations. The interest of the money for which you will sell your estates, will undoubtedly be considerable enough to render you independent, and, I have no doubt, happy : at all events, let me share your pleasures and your griefs, as I will make you both partakers of mine."

When Rhodiska and Rosomaski had come to a determination to dispose of their estates, they were publicly offered for sale: but no one would venture to risk their lives or their money, on a purchase which might endanger both. The unfortunate couple were again disappointed, and would have sunk into despondency, if Theresia had not encouraged and animated them.— At last, one Ishmael, a Jew, who was rich enough to farm the immense revenue of the salt-mines of Wielitska from the government, offered to risk a sum equal to about one-fourth of the real value of the estates. It was accepted, and Vistulof and Dorbalec owned another lord. In parting with these family domains, Rhodiska and
Rosomaski

Rosomaski thought they had disarmed their enemy at last; but, like fuel to fire, his vengeance encreased with their misfortunes, and soon blazed out with more violence than ever.

CHAP. IX.

ONE evening Rhodiska, Rosomaski, and their daughter Paulina, who had already made her *entrée* into company, prepared themselves to pay a visit to one of their new acquaintance, who resided at the opposite extremity of the city. They had not been able to prevail upon Theresia to accompany them; she complained of a slight

slight indisposition; but the true cause of her complaint was the unaccountable absence of Ludowico.

Scarcely had the visiting party left the house, before they were surprised by a very heavy shower of rain. They would gladly have turned back, but this visit had been already too long delayed, to be deferred any longer. They got into a berlin, which stood within two hundred paces of their door, as if waiting to be hired. It was then about seven o'clock, and the sun had quitted the horizon, to give place to its sister, the moon. The last month of autumn had just commenced, and light frosts pronounced the approach of blustering winter. The berlin drove off across the city, and arrived at the quarter to which the coachman had been ordered to take them. If the party within had been ever so well acquainted with the city, of which, however, they scarcely knew any part, they would not have been able to perceive whether the coachman was going right or
wrong,

wrong, on account of the darkness and coldness of the night, and the abundance of the rain, which made them take the precaution of putting up the glasses.— Their attention was absorbed in interesting conversation, particularly on what could be the cause of Ludowico's detention, which began to give them great uneasiness, insomuch, that they did not perceive that the coach was far beyond the place to which they were going—in reality, they were without the city, and in a bye-road.

Rosomaski, surprised at their not having yet arrived at their place of destination, was about to make some enquiries of the coachman, when suddenly the carriage stopped, the doors were opened at once, and on each side appeared a man, armed with a pistol, who cried out—" You are dead if you offer to stir."

Paulina immediately fainted. Rhodiska's attention was distracted from the thoughts of the impending danger by her daughter's situation,

situation, and Rosomaski was incapable of making the least defence. As he thought himself in perfect security in the streets of Cracow, he had laid aside the precaution, which he had never failed of taking at Vistulof, of being armed. The two banditti jumped into the carriage, whilst two others supplied their places at the doors, and threatened their prisoners with the most horrid sufferings, if they dared to offer the least resistance. Rosomaski was instantly bound in such a manner that he could scarcely move, and the ruffians then proceeded to exercise the same violence towards Rhodiska; but she perceived that, in performing this office, they treated her in such a manner as not to alarm her modesty. They contented themselves with simply fastening the hands of Paulina, who was suffered to remain on the same seat with her mother, whilst the two banditti took their places on the opposite seat, one on each side of Rosomaski. The coachman was then ordered to drive on, with as
much

much speed as the darkness would permit, with safety to the vehicle. The berlin again moved on, with a slow pace at first, until it gained the high road, and then went off with rapidity.

“My dear Rosomaski,” cried Rhodiska, “must all our steps be strewed with snares? This carriage, which I have, for several days following, remarked standing at a little distance from our house, waited only to receive its prey—it is only when misfortunes are realized, that we begin to see the circumstances which were preparatory to them. We had scarcely ascended this fatal vehicle, before I observed the coachman whisper to a man, who instantly ran off, without a doubt, to prepare the stratagem of which we are to become the victims. Why did I not then guess the end of this preparation?—why had I not strength of mind sufficient to stop the carriage in the streets of Cracow, where we might have received assistance?”

“Dearest Rhodiska,” replied Rosomaski,
“my

“ my own fate gives me little uneasiness ; I think only on thine and our Paulina’s. I would willingly yield my life to save both of yours. Why was I not armed ?—I would have——”

“ Finish this insolent dialogue,” cried one of the brigands, “ or we know how to constrain you to silence: we carry about with us the means of shutting your mouths.”

Rhodiska and Rosomaski readily comprehended from this speech, that the brigands threatened them with a gag, and they thought it prudent to restrain the expression of their griefs within their own labouring bosoms. The carriage continued to roll on, without intermission, during the whole of the night, which these unfortunate captives passed without closing an eye, in expectation of some horrid sequel to this extraordinary adventure. When the day broke, they discovered that their guards wore masks, which effectually concealed their faces, and each held a pistol in their hands. On perceiving, however,
that

that the sight of their arms alarmed Paulina, they placed them on the seat behind them, whence they could reach them in an instant.

In this state of horrible anxiety, the Rosomaskis were hurried along for seven days, and an equal number of nights, successively. At last the carriage stopped, and they were ordered to alight. One of the banditti then addressed them in these words—

“ Your invisible enemy is at length weary of persecuting you, but his mortal hatred towards you would never have ceased whilst you remained near him. In pity; therefore, to your sufferings, he has caused you to be removed to a great distance, where, if you remain, you will be free from his vengeance; but he has instructed me to inform you, that if ever you attempt to set foot again within the limits of Poland, he will infallibly cause you all to pay for the rash attempt with your lives.— If you are wise, you will not put it to the trial.

trial. The road before you leads to Genoa, from which city you are not far distant. That is the place which he who is the arbiter of your fate, has fixed upon for your exile, which is to continue for life. If you ever should seek to quit it, tremble for your lives."

Having said these words, he unbound Rhodiska and Paulina, and instantly got into the carriage, which turned about, and returned the same route by which it came. The first care of Rhodiska was, with the assistance of Paulina, to detach the bandage from the eyes of Rosomaski, and to free him from the shackles which fastened his legs and arms. That done, she embraced him, and cried with an agony of despair—

"Alas, my Rosomaski! you have heard our doom—we are banished for ever from our native country and our friends. What is to become of us?"

"Providence will protect us," replied Rosomaski, "and we cannot find worse
VOL. II. II enemies

enemies in a foreign country, than we have met with in our own—But we must be walking—the sun has not more than two or three hours to the horizon, and we know not how far we may have to walk before we reach Genoa, if we are really in the neighbourhood of that city.”

Rosomaski, with Rhodiska and Paulina under his arms, walked on ; but they saw no signs of any city, after a journey of nearly two hours. The road was very narrow, and so overhung with rocks on each side, that, at times, they almost entirely lost what little daylight still remained. No sounds were heard, but those of the breezes playing amidst the lofty pines and other mountainous trees, which crowned the summits of the rude masses over their heads. Rhodiska and Paulina shrunk with horror from the idea of being benighted in such a place. At length the deep hollow chasm, through which they travelled, seemed to widen ; in a short time they beheld a charming valley beneath them, and beyond that,

that, the dusky clouds which covered a large city. As the sea was apparent to a still greater distance, they concluded that their conductor had not deceived them, and that the city before them was really that of Genoa. As the valley was well inhabited, and their road on a descent, they quickened their pace, that they might reach some house before the night should overtake them. Although from the edge of the mountains the valley appeared close beneath them, yet their descent employed them nearly another hour, and Rhodiska and Paulina were nearly ready to sink, when Rosomaski beheld a large building at a small distance from the road. He supported their tottering steps towards it; but before they could reach it, they beheld a person, habited as a monk, coming towards them. Rosomaski saluted him, and the other returned the salute with some words which were unknown, but which Rosomaski readily guessed to have been spoke in the Italian language. Rhodiska spoke

the monk in French, but he only shook his head, as much as to signify, that he did not understand her. He made signs to them, however, to stay where they were, whilst he went to the house. In less than ten minutes he returned with another brother, who spoke the French language, to whom Rhodiska briefly communicated their distressed situation, and begged his assistance to procure them a lodging for the night, as she believed it impossible for herself and daughter, who were already exhausted, to reach Genoa. The brother expressed much sorrow for their melancholy case, but informed her that the building before them was a monastery, belonging to a strict order, who never admitted any of the female sex among them. He added, that he would endeavour to use his influence with a cottager, who resided at a little distance, to give them what accommodation his cottage would afford, and that he would take care to supply them from the convent with every refreshment
which

which they should require. Rhodiska and Paulina expressed their thanks in a very forcible manner, and the monk set out with them towards the cottage which he had mentioned. When they reached it, the monk had no sooner acquainted the cottager with the situation of the strangers, than he readily consented to his proposal, to accommodate them to the best of his power. The monk then said some words to the cottager, and departed.

The cottager made up his fire, and placed seats for them before it. He then left them for nearly an hour, at the end of which time he returned, bringing with him a basket, containing some bottles of wine and an elegant little repast.—Having spread the cloth on the table, and placed every other requisite on it, the cottager made signs to his guests to fall to. Although the Rosomaskis had not been ill supplied with provisions on the road, yet the thoughts of their situation had deprived them of appetite; they were now at liberty, and their repast was grateful to them—so

true is it, that there is no enjoyment in this life without liberty.

Soon after they had finished their supper, the monk entered the room, and informed them, that though the female sex could not be admitted within the walls of the monastery to which he belonged, yet there was nothing to impede them from enjoying the pleasure of their company and conversation without; therefore, if it was agreeable to them, he was come to pass away an hour or so with them. The Rosomaskis replied, that it would be conferring an additional obligation on them. They were soon delighted with him, for besides a greater fund of learning than his brotherhood usually possessed, he had seen much of the world. He had wit at command, and he always measured it out according to the extent of genius of his company: every one was at their ease with him—if they felt his superiority, he enjoyed it with so much humility as not to hurt their feelings—his sallies had nothing
of

of the satirical and biting in them ; in short, he was one of those extraordinary men who, place them where you will, have enough wit to be agreeable, and know how to conceal their having any more.

Rhodiska, who was surprised at this phenomenon of the cowl, could not help enquiring what was the particular reason of visitors of her sex being excluded from his monastery ?

“ By the express will of the founder,” replied the monk, “ it was made one of the principal institutes. His history is remarkable, and, if you please, I will relate it to you.”

The Rosomaskis expressed their desire to hear it.

“ Our founder,” said the monk, “ was the Marquis of Pallavicini, of one of the first houses in Cagliari, the capital of the island of Sardinia. He married the heiress of a family no less considerable, when she was only fifteen, although at that age one

of the most accomplished women in the universe.

“The Marquis had been educated with one of his cousins-german, named Don Louis, and the sympathy between their humours and inclinations was so surprising, that they seemed much more closely united by friendship than by blood. They had no reserve with each other; and when the Marquis was married, their attachment suffered no diminution.

“Every day the Marquis discovered new charms in the person and understanding of his wife, and his passion increased accordingly. He spoke incessantly of his happiness to Don Louis; and whenever any affair obliged the Marquis to be absent from home, he always entreated his cousin to keep her company in his absence—He did so: but how difficult is it, at an age when one is incapable of serious reflections, to be continually in the company of so young, so beautiful, and so amiable a person, and to behold her with indifference? Don Louis

Louis was already deeply enamoured with the Marchioness, when he thought he loved her only for the sake of her husband. Whilst he was in this error, she fell dangerously ill, and he experienced all those violent disquietudes which he then knew, but too late, were occasioned by a passion which would embitter all the rest of his days.— Finding himself in such a situation, without any power of resisting his fate, he adopted the magnanimous resolution of flying to a distance, from a place where he ran the risk of falling a martyr to his passion, or of trampling upon the sacred duties of friendship. The most cruel death would have seemed to him more mild than the execution of this design; yet, when the Marchioness began to be convalescent, he went to bid her adieu, and to see her no more.

“ She was employed in choosing out some very valuable jewels, of which she was about to order a new assortment. Don Louis had scarcely entered her apartment,

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before:

before she desired him, with that air of familiarity which is customary between near relations, to go into her cabinet and bring her the rest of her jewels. He hastened to obey her, and by a happiness which he little expected, he found among what he was seeking for, a portrait of the Marchioness drawn in enamel, surrounded with diamonds, and attached to a plait of her hair; it was so strong a resemblance, that he had not the strength to resist the pressing inclination which he felt to appropriate it to his own use.—‘I am going to leave her,’ said he; ‘I shall no more behold her; I sacrifice all my repose to that of her husband. Is not that sufficient?—and may I not, without a crime, seek in my misfortune so innocent a consolation as this?’

“He bestowed many kisses on the portrait, which he carefully concealed round his arm; and returning to the Marchioness with her other jewels, he acquainted her, with trembling, of his resolution to travel. She appeared surprised at it, and changed colour.

four. He looked at her, and had the pleasure of perceiving it: their eyes expressed infinitely more than their looks.

‘Ah! who can oblige you, Don Louis,’ said she, ‘to leave your cousin, who is so ardently attached to you, and me, who so greatly esteem you? We are rejoiced to see you, and he will not be able to live without you. Have you not already travelled? You must undoubtedly have some other reason for leaving us; but, at least, do not conceal it from us.’

“Don Louis, full of grief, could not refrain from giving a deep sigh, and taking one of the hands of this beautiful person, which he pressed respectfully to his lips—‘Ah Madam!’ said he, ‘what would you have me say to you, and what can I say to you in the state in which I am?’

“The Marchioness could not avoid perceiving the extreme agitation under which he laboured, and she remained silent and confused; she dared not lift her eyes up to him, but they discovered some tears,

which she could neither restrain nor resolve to hide from him.

“ They had scarcely recovered from those first sensations, in which the heart listens only to its own impulse, before the Marquis entered the room. He ran to embrace Don Louis with all the tokens of a sincere friendship, and he was inconsolable, when he was informed that he was about to depart for Naples. He omitted nothing to dissuade him from it: in vain were all his grief and remonstrances—Don Louis was immoveable in his design. He took leave of the Marchioness on the spot, and never saw her again before his departure. The Marquis left the room with him, and did not leave him till the moment of his setting off. This only served to increase the affliction of Don Louis, as he wished to have been left alone, to give vent to his sorrows.

“ The Marchioness was sensibly affected by this separation; she had perceived that Don Louis loved her before he was acquainted

quainted with it himself, and she had found such amiable qualities in him, that she had returned his passion, without being aware of it; but she was too well convinced of it after his departure. As she was but just recovered from her illness, of which she had not yet entirely got the better, this additional chagrin caused her to relapse into a state of langour, which, in a short time, made a perceptible havock in her person, which scarcely appeared the same. Her duty, virtue, and reason, alike persecuted her; she was gratefully sensible of the kindness of her husband, and she could not suffer, without much pain, that another should possess her thoughts, and occupy his place in her affections. She dared no more pronounce the name of Don Louis—she never made any enquiries concerning him, because she had made it an indispensable duty to endeavour to forget him.—This restraint made her endure a continual martyrdom, and she could not help confiding the cause of her pangs to one of her

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her domestics, who was much attached to her.

‘Am I not very miserable,’ said the Marchioness, ‘to be obliged never to behold again a man for whom I do not entertain an indifference, and whose image is ever before me? Too ingenious to torment myself, I think I ever behold him in the person of my husband; the resemblance which there is between them, serves only to keep my tenderness alive. Ah! Marianne, I must die to expiate this crime, although it be involuntary: there remains only this mode of getting rid of a passion which I have hitherto strove in vain to subdue.—Alas! what have I not done to stifle this passion, which still continues to be pleasing to me!’

“She accompanied these words with a flood of tears, and many deep sighs; and, although Marianne was a girl of sense, and strongly attached to her mistress, yet she could think of nothing to say which might console her.

“During

“ During this time, the Marquis was continually reproaching his wife with her indifference towards Don Louis.—‘ I cannot suffer,’ said he, ‘ that you should so soon forget the man in the world whom I loved the most, and who entertained the strongest friendship for all which was dear to me. I must confess to you that it is a sort of coldness, which gives me an unfavourable opinion of the goodness of your heart; you cannot deny that he was scarcely gone before you had forgotten him.’

‘ Of what use would my remembrance of him be?’ replied the Marchioness. ‘ Do you not see that he flies from us? Would he not be still with us, if he preferred our friendship to his own pleasures? Believe me, he deserves that we should shew as much indifference for him, as he has evinced for us.’

“ Whatever she could say had no effect on the Marquis, who continually persecuted her to write to Don Louis to return. One day, when she entered into his cabi-

net, to speak to him about some affairs, she found him engaged in reading a letter, which he had just received from Don Louis. She was about to retire, but he took that opportunity of obliging her to do what he desired. He told her very seriously, that he could no longer endure the absence of his cousin, and that he was resolved to go and find him. He added, that two years had elapsed without his expressing the least wish to return to his country and friends, and that he was persuaded he would have more deference for her entreaties than his own. He enjoined her to write to him, or, if she refused him that satisfaction, he was resolved to set out on a visit to him at Naples, where he still remained. The Marchioness was excessively surprised and embarrassed by this proposal; but perceiving that he expected her answer with an extreme disquietude, she said—‘What do you wish me to write to him? Dictate to me what you think proper, and I will write it; that is all I can do, and I think

think myself that it is more than I ought to do.'

"The Marquis was so transported with joy at her compliance, that he embraced her tenderly, thanked her for her compliance, and made her write the following words in his presence :—

'If you have any friendship for us, do not delay your return—I have pressing reasons to desire it. I have almost erased you from my remembrance, on account of not hearing you speak of coming to us, and you repay my indifference with one still more cutting. Return, Don Louis; I wish it—I beseech it; and if it were permitted me to make use of stronger terms, I should perhaps say that I command it.'

"The Marquis sealed this fatal letter, and sent it off without a line from himself,
that

that Don Louis might not think that the Marchioness had written it by his express desire. He expected the return of the special messenger whom he sent with it, with the most extreme impatience.

“ What must have been the sensations of Don Louis at the sight of so unhopèd-for an intreaty ! Though he had remarked that his passion had not been without a return, yet had he never dared to entertain a hope that the Marchioness would have desired his return.

‘ How unhappy am I,’ said he, ‘ in adoring the most amiable woman in the universe, and in not being able even to wish to please her ! she is not insensible of my sufferings, and yet honour and friendship oppose my taking advantage of her favourable sentiments. What must I do then ?—I flattered myself that absence would cure me, but I have tried it without effect ; I have never cast my eyes on her portrait, without finding myself more amorous and more miserable than when I beheld her
every

every day. I must obey her—she orders my return; and she cannot be ignorant of my passion. When I took leave of her, my eyes declared the secret of my heart; and when I remember what I saw in hers, all my resolutions, to deny myself the happiness of being near her, become useless; and I prefer dying at her feet, to living at a distance from her.’

“He set off on the same day which he received the message, leaving the regulation of his affairs to an intimate friend; and, so ardent was he to behold the Marchioness again, that he travelled, if not with the wings of the god of love, at least with the most expeditious conveyance that he could find. On his arrival at Cagliari, he was informed that the Marquis and Marchioness were at a magnificent country house, to which the Viceroy and all the court were gone to visit them. He also learned that the Marquis was preparing for the entertainment of his noble guests, a tournament, after the ancient manner of
the

the Moors. He himself was to maintain that *a husband beloved, is happier than a lover.*

“Many, who were of a different opinion, were preparing themselves to dispute the prize with him, which, at the desire of the Vice-Queen, was to be presented to the conqueror by the hand of the Marchioness; and that there might not be the least restraint, every person was to appear masked.

Don Louis was secretly displeased at finding that the Marquis was so well satisfied of his happiness, and he could not bear the thoughts of a contented rival, without entertaining a wish of troubling his felicity, by triumphing over his vain glory. Having formed this design, he would not appear publickly in the city; that his arrival might be a secret. He caused a habit of green and gold to be prepared, and liveries of the same colour, to mark his growing hopes.

“When he entered the lists, all eyes were drawn towards him; and the magnificence

cence of his dress, and his gallant deportment, excited much emulation in the gentlemen, and much curiosity in the ladies. The Marchioness was sensibly touched at his appearance, without having the least suspicion who was the cause of her agitation. He was placed near the balcony, where she was sitting with the Vice-Queen; but there was no lady who did not suffer by a comparison with the Marchioness.—Her youthful air, which was not then of more than eighteen years standing—her complexion of the rose and lily blended—her eyes languishingly tender—her agreeable smile, and her majestic stature, rendered her the admiration of every beholder.

“Don Louis was so overjoyed at beholding her again so lovely, and at remarking, amidst her charms, a melancholy look, that he flattered himself with having some share in her thoughts; and this was the first moment in which he imagined himself happy. When it came to his turn, he run
against

against the Marquis, and acquitted himself with so much address, either in attacking or defending, that he carried off the prize with an universal applause. He went to throw himself at the feet of the Marchioness, to receive it from her hands, and disguising his voice and speaking to her with his mask on, so low that he could be heard only by herself, he said—‘ Divine Marchioness, please to remember that fortune has decided in favour of *lovers*.’

“ He dared not say more, and without knowing him, she delivered the prize to him, with that natural grace which accompanied all her actions.

“ He withdrew instantly, for fear of being known, as he guessed that it would have been the subject of a quarrel between himself and the Marquis, who would undoubtedly never have forgiven him for the victory which he had won over him. This consideration compelled him to keep himself still concealed, during several days longer. The Viceroy and his Queen soon
after

after returned to the capital, and the Marquis and Marchioness followed them with the rest of the court.

“ Don Louis then discovered himself, and feigned to be just arrived. He did not even appear to be acquainted with what had passed in the country. The Marquis was so rejoiced at seeing him, that absence seemed to have encreased the attachment which he had for his relation. It was not a difficult matter for Don Louis to find a favourable moment to discourse in private with the amiable Marchioness, as he had as much liberty in the house as if it had been his own ; and he did not forget to speak to her of the prize which he had received from her fair hands.

‘ How unfortunate I was,’ said he, ‘ that you did not recognise me : I flattered myself that some secret impulse would give you to understand, that no other than myself could have so successfully maintained the cause of lovers against that of husbands.’

‘ No,

‘No, Don Louis,’ replied she, with an air of dignity, to repel every presumptuous hope, ‘I was not inclined to guess that you could be the supporter of so bad a cause; and I should never have thought that you had so firmly engaged yourself at Naples, as to come so far as Sardinia to triumph over a friend, who maintained my interest as well as his own.’

‘I shall die with grief, Madam,’ said Don Louis, ‘if I have displeased you by what I have done; and if you are favourably disposed towards me, and I could dare to make you my confidant, it would not be difficult for me to convince you that it is not at Naples that I have left the object of my wishes.’

“As the Marchioness dreaded lest he should say more than she was willing to hear, and perceived that he appeared much chagrined at the reproach which she had made him, she put on a sportive air, and turning the discourse into a sort of raillery, she told him that he took what she had said

said too seriously. He dared not make use of this opportunity to declare his passion; if he loved her beyond the world, his respect for her was no less than his love.

“When he had left her, he began to reproach himself with his timidity—‘Shall I then suffer always,’ said he, ‘without seeking some remedy for my sufferings?’

“Some time elapsed before he could again meet with a favourable opportunity of discoursing on this subject, because the Marchioness avoided him. But one evening he accidentally found her alone in her cabinet, which appeared like the drawing-room of the Graces. The ceiling was painted and gilt, the walls were hung from top to bottom with large mirrors; a chandelier of crystal, and girandoles of the same, were filled with waxlights, which throwing their light around her, made her appear as the most beautiful woman in the universe. She was seated on a sofa, in a most enchanting dishabille, with her hair ornamented with

some clusters of brilliants, and falling negligently over her shoulders. The confusion which she was in at seeing Don Louis, was apparent in her countenance, and rendered her more lovely. He approached her with a timid and respectful air, threw himself on his knees before her, and looked at her some time without daring to say a word. At length becoming more bold, he said to her—

‘ If you consider, Madam, the pitiable state to which I am reduced, you will easily comprehend that it is no longer in my power to keep silence. I have not been able to withstand such irresistible charms as you possess. I adored so soon as I beheld you, and I have in vain endeavoured to cure myself, by flying from you. I have torn myself from myself when I hastened away from you, but my passion has not been the less violent. You have recalled me from my voluntary exile, and I die a thousand deaths every day in my uncertainty—If you are so cruel as to refuse me

your

your pity, suffer, at least, that after having confessed my passion, I die through grief at your feet,'

“The Marchioness was some time before she could resolve on making him any answer; at length gaining confidence, she said to him—

‘Don Louis, I have long since known a part of your sentiments; but I wished to persuade myself that they were the effects of an innocent attachment. Do not seek to make me a partaker of your crime, for it certainly is one, to betray the friendship which you owe to the Marquis. Your duty forbids you to love me—mine not only forbids the same thing, but orders me to avoid you: I shall certainly do so—and I know not whether I ought not to hate you; but that appears impossible.’

‘Ah Madam! do you not hate me?—do you not do me all the injury of which you are capable, by taking a resolution to fly from me?—do not leave your vengeance incomplete?—Finish it—sacrifice

me to your duty and your husband, since life is hateful to me, if you deprive me of the hope of pleasing you.'

'Don Louis,' replied the Marchioness, with an air which discovered how much she was softened by his grief, 'you make me reproaches, which I would wish to deserve really.'

"Then dreading lest her tenderness should triumph over her reason, she rose, and, in spite of every effort which he made to retain her, she went into another chamber, where some of her attendants were.

"She thought she had gained a great conquest over herself, by having drawn herself out of this embarrassing conversation, without having answered so favourably as her heart could have wished; but love is a seducer, who must not be listened to for an instant, to be successfully withstood. From that day, Don Louis began to think himself happy, though he had made very little progress towards perfect felicity. The Marchioness had, in reality,
a principle

a principle of virtue which always kept her strictly within the bounds of her duty.

“ Don Louis had no more of those scruples of friendship for the Marquis, which had before so much disquieted him : love had entirely exiled friendship, and he even hated him in secret. He lost no opportunity of seeking some favourable moment to touch the heart of the Marchioness; and knowing, one excessively hot day, that the Marchioness was accustomed to sleep after dinner, as was the custom of the country, he went throughout the house to find her.

“ She was in a lower apartment, which looked towards the garden, and the room was darkened, that the light might not prevent her from repose. So indistinctly were the surrounding objects to be seen, that it was no wonder if the Marchioness, half asleep, never imagining that Don Louis would have been so emboldened, mistook him for the Marquis, whom (as has been said before) he much resembled. Don Louis perceived her error, by her calling

him her dear Marquis, as she held out one of her hands to him ; and whatever pleasure it afforded him, yet he would infinitely rather have been indebted for it to her partiality for himself. He was resolved, however, not to miss the advantage, which so unexpected a chance had thrown in his way, when the Marquis entered the room at this dangerous moment, and was stung with the most violent rage, indignation, and jealousy, at the liberty which he saw Don Louis taking with his wife. At the noise which he made on entering, the Marchioness turned her eyes towards the door, and beholding her husband, whom she had imagined to be at her side, her surprise and affliction were inconceivable, at finding herself in the arms of another.

“ Don Louis instantly took flight, flattering himself that he should not be known, and passing into a balcony, he jumped down into the garden, and escaped by a back gate. The Marquis pursued him without success; but as he returned, he unfortunately

fortunately found under the balcony the portrait of the Marchioness, which had fallen from the arm of the fugitive, as he got over the railing to jump down into the garden. This accidental discovery gave birth to the most cruel reflections;—a *tête-à-tête* between Don Louis and his wife, at an hour when ladies see no person—her portrait, which he supposed the Marchioness must have bestowed on him—and the familiarity which he had witnessed between them, all conspired together to make him suspect his wife's virtue.

‘I am betrayed,’ exclaimed he; ‘betrayed by all that I loved in the world!’

“As he said these words, he entered the apartment of the Marchioness, who threw herself at his feet, and began to make the most solemn protestations of her innocence; but the demon of jealousy possessed him to such a pitch, that he spurned her with his foot: he no longer listened to any thing but the dictates of his rage

and despair, and turning away his eyes, that he might not behold so amiable and so beloved an object, he had the barbarity to plunge his dagger into her, and left her, supposed as dead, weltering in her crimson stream."

CHAP. X.

"THE Marquis embraced his innocent victim—hastily took what jewels and money he could find—mounted his horse, and rode off with the utmost speed. He crossed over to the continent, and wandered about for years in the utmost agony of mind. At length, he determined to retire
from

from the world, and he obtained leave from Rome to found our monastery, one of the principal institutes of which was to be the total exclusion of the female sex. He ended his gloomy life not long since, in the full persuasion of the infidelity and death of his wife; but he was equally mistaken in both these points. She recovered, and was safely delivered of a child, of which she was then pregnant, and arrived here soon after the Marquis's death, to undeceive him in his groundless jealousy.— She, at present, resides, I believe, in Genoa."

The monk had scarcely ended this melancholy narrative, before the bell summoned him to vespers. He apologised for the absolute necessity which he was under of leaving them, and gave them a note, which contained a recommendation to a French house in Genoa, until they should have heard from their friends at Cracow, and have determined upon their future mode of life. The Rosomaskis again expressed,

pressed their sense of his favours, and he departed.

The cottager then shewed the ladies into a little adjoining room, where was his own bed for themselves, and he made a substitute for a bed, with some clean straw and a blanket, for himself and Rosomaski, before the fire in the outer room, where they had been sitting.

The night's repose was no less refreshing than the repast had been, since they were released from all their fears. In the morning they breakfasted with their hospitable host, and offered to pay him for their entertainment; but the old man put back Rosomaski's hand, which held out the money, placed his own on his bosom, and bowed in token of declining it. A dumb ceremony at parting took place, for words were useless between those who could not understand each other; and the Rosomaskis again went towards Genoa. When they arrived within the walls, they easily found the house to which the monk had recommended

mended them, by shewing the address of his note. It was a tavern kept by a Frenchman, who received them with much civility; and after having been made acquainted with the misfortunes which had brought them to Genoa, he offered them whatever his house afforded, till they could hear from their friends at Cracow.

Rosomaski was for accepting this obliging offer, but Rhodiska pressed him to go at once into furnished apartments, as the most retired and cheapest method of living. On the night when they were carried away from Cracow, as they had been going to visit one of the first families in the city, Rhodiska had taken some of the most valuable of her jewels with her. She had put them into her pocket, in a case, and intended to decorate herself with them in the antichamber of the house at which they were to pay their visit, because, as they kept no carriage, she did not think proper to walk through the streets with them at dusk. This precaution had prob-

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bably

bably preserved them from the banditti.— She now produced them, to the infinite joy of Rosomaski, who had envisaged nothing but poverty in a strange country. The French landlord recommended them to a jeweller, who purchased their valuables, and to an acquaintance of his who kept a lodging-house, and who accommodated them with neat apartments, at a moderate rate.

The Rosomaskis now began to smile in the midst of their misfortunes. They thought themselves out of danger of their invisible and implacable enemy, and their little fortune was in the hands of their friend Theresia, to whom they immediately dispatched a letter, giving an account of their last misfortune, and desiring her to remit them the money in her hands, as they preferred living at Genoa in peace, to returning to Cracow, to brave the fury of their mortal foe. But when some months had elapsed, without their hearing from Cracow, and their little stock of cash had

3 dwindled

dwindled away nearly one half, all their fears began to return. Letter after letter had been dispatched to Theresia at Cracow, but neither of them produced an answer; and the hideous picture of squalid poverty stalked day and night before the eyes of the afflicted exiles.

Whilst the unfortunate Rosomaskis were thus abandoning themselves to grief and despair, the disconsolate Theresia was in a situation no less pitiable. It would be impossible to paint the cruel alarms which assailed her on the night they were carried off from Cracow, when she heard the hour of midnight sounded by all the clocks of the adjacent steeples, and beheld nothing of her friends. In spite of the persuasions of her waiting-woman, she refused to retire to her chamber, and remained sitting up for them till the approach of day was no longer dubious. They had promised her, at setting off, that nothing should retain them after the hour of eleven. Overcome with watching and disquietude,
she

she then fell into a short kind of restless broken slumber, and was shocked at awaking, to hear that her friends were not yet returned. The day following passed without bringing any news of them: in the evening, Theresia dispatched a messenger to the house at which they were to have paid their visit; but he returned with the tidings that they had never been there. She then abandoned herself to the most gloomy apprehensions, and shed tears in abundance.

“Why am I so unhappy?” she exclaimed. “I had found valuable friends, with whom I began to lose the remembrance of my late misfortunes. What is become of them? Are they the victims of some new machination of their invisible enemy? What has happened to Ludowico? Perhaps he, also, has fallen into some snare of that fiend, who detests him, because he is the firm friend of those whom he seeks to destroy. Ah! generous friend of the most amiable couple! you will never more behold

hold those who are so dear to you: they are undoubtedly lost to you and myself: they are now sinking—perhaps they have already sunk, under the baneful malignity of their persecutor. Unhappy pair! you are condemned to shed eternal tears—You cannot have absented yourselves from us voluntarily: no—you have been carried off by violence, and without suspicion of its lying in wait for you.”

Whilst Theresia was causing inquiries to be made throughout the city and its suburbs, to gain some intelligence of the unfortunate subjects of them, Ludowico had fallen into a snare, whence he was not to be speedily extricated.

After his last departure from the Castle of Vistulof, to search for the lost Ladislaus, he pressed on from town to town, with all speed. He passed several days in making inquiries, which, however, turned out fruitless. He was not discouraged at his ill success, and would have attempted to have explored, even to the north pole, if his endeavours

deavours would have given any satisfaction to his distressed friends. After visiting several other towns, he bent his way towards Jaroslow : as soon as he arrived there, he gave information to the magistrates of the loss of the little Ladislaus, and engaged them to commence a strict search after the authors of it. He then went round to all his acquaintance in that town, and begged their assistance in the affair. Not a place in or near the town escaped their survey ; but they met with no success. At last he thought of Mrs. Vendost ; but he held her in so little estimation, that he was at first extremely averse to calling upon her : the object of his mission was, however, so dear to him, that it soon banished every kind of antipathy.

He went to the house of Mrs. Vendost, and found her elegantly dressed. Every thing about her bespoke the affected coquette, whose whole happiness consisted in attracting frivolous homage. At the very instant that he entered the room, she was saying :

saying to an old nurse, who held a child in her arms—"Be sure you endeavour to please my son, and keep him quiet till I return from the ball."

This sentence revived all his disgust, and created within him a painful reflection on those imprudent and unnatural mothers who, in a manner so fatal to their children, abandon the sacred maternal functions for the vain dissipations of the world. His first movement was to look at the child, whose face was attracted towards him, at the noise which he made on entering the room.

"Good heavens!" he cried, "how much this child resembles the one whom I am in search of!—If you had not this instant called him *your* son, Madam, I should have taken him for that of my dearest friends, Rhodiska and Rosomaski, who are, at this moment, bewailing their Ladislaus, who has been carried off from them."

"It is very possible," said Mrs. Vendost, turning away her head, as if to look at a glass,

glass, for the purpose of adjusting some part of her dress. "I remember, now you mention it, having remarked, during my stay at the Castle of Vistulof, that there was a very strong resemblance between my son and that of the child of whom you speak. But in so tender an age, children have their features so little marked with character or expression, that it is no uncommon thing to see so strong a resemblance as might even deceive the mothers themselves."

"But this is inconceivable," said Ludowico, looking still nearer at the child; "the more I regard it, the stronger is my belief that it is really the little Ladislaus. Here are his hair, his eyes, his mouth, his very smile: if he was not dressed otherwise than I have been accustomed to see him, the resemblance would have been still more striking."

"Sir," said a young fribble, whose easy manners bespoke an intimate connexion with Mrs. Vendost, "to what purpose can
all

all these useless examinations tend? Mrs. Vendost has told you that this is *her* son, and that ought to suffice a well-bred man. Mrs. Vendost is waiting to be acquainted with the business which has procured her the honour of your visit.”

Though Ludowico was displeased at this abrupt and impertinent speech, yet he contented himself with casting a look of ineffable contempt on the little inflated animal who had uttered it, and with merely answering, that the object of his visit was already fulfilled. He then withdrew, without making use of any great ceremony.— As he was fully persuaded that the child whom he had seen at Mrs. Vendost’s, was really the one he was in search of, (without reflecting that himself alone could never hope to bear down, with his single word, the numerous proofs with which Mrs. Vendost would take care to be provided, in case she could have been guilty of so atrocious an act, as that of depriving parents of their child,) he did not hesitate an instant

stant to reclaim it, in the name of Rosmaski and Rhodiska, and to demand the interposition of the public authority, to cause the child to be delivered up to him, as the representative of the real parents. His demand was complied with, so far as to cause Mrs. Vendost to be summoned to appear before the magistrates with the child. She could not avoid paying obedience to it, and appeared with the child before the judges, whom she addressed in the following terms, whilst her eyes were filled with tears—

“ I cannot help being much shocked at this cruel and unnatural pretension, which tends to rob me of all I hold dear in life. Instead of persecuting me, one would have expected that my situation would have excited commiseration. Here is the only child, who gives me some small consolation for the loss of a tender and beloved husband, who has fallen a victim to the most tragical accident, and some enemies have now planned to rob me of my only hope.

hope, and the only object on whom I can repose my affections. It is not the child, but the father's fortune, which is their aim; but I am tranquil as to the event. I trust to your discrimination, and the goodness of my cause—numbers are ready to declare that this child is *mine*, and the only fruit of my marriage with Mr. Vendost."

As she ended these words, she took the child on her knees. The innocent creature smiled in her face, as he held up his little arms to embrace her, and called her by that appellation so pleasing to the ears of all mothers. Mrs. Vendost had taken care to come accompanied with the young coxcomb who paid his addresses to her, her two brethren, and several other relations. They all instantly exclaimed, that it was absurd to wish to contest a child with its mother.

The judges then caused the child to be put down and left to himself, and bade the relations of Mrs. Vendost and Ludowico to call him in turn, and to see if he would answer

answer their caresses equally. The brethren of Mrs. Vendost first made the trial, and the child smiled, uttered some inarticulate sounds, and gave them his hand.—Ludowico next made the same trial, but the child only looked at him with a vacant stare, as those of that age generally eye strangers. The judges then declared, that for the present, Mrs. Vendost appeared to them to be really the mother; but that no definitive sentence could be given, till Rhodiska and Rosomaski should also appear before them. The child was ordered to remain with Mrs. Vendost, till another trial could be made.

Ludowico instantly directed his horse towards the Castle of Vistulof, where he expected to have found Rhodiska and Rosomaski, as he was ignorant of their having left it; but he had no sooner learnt that they had quitted the country to reside in Cracow, than he hastened after them. He was transporting himself with the ideas of the happiness which he should infuse into
the

the bosoms of his friends, and particularly of Rhodiska, the tenderest of mothers, when a new subject of grief attended him, as he arrived within the distance of a quarter of a league from the walls of Cracow. It was then nearly dark, and his horse, quite jaded, could not stir out of a walk, when several persons, whom there was just light enough for him to see were dressed as soldiers, rushed out upon him, from a thicket which adjoined the road, dismounted, and bound his arms behind him, blindfolded him, and made him walk on foot to the city, which, by the pavement, he soon discovered they had entered. After walking a considerable way through it, Ludowico perceived that they were ascending an eminence: at length they stopped; he heard his guards challenged as by a centinel, and make some reply, which he supposed to be a countersign. His ears were then saluted with the clanking of chains, and a harsh grating, which resembled the letting down of a drawbridge, as in reality

ality it was. He was then led on, and warned by his conductors that there were some steps to descend just before him.—Ludowico observed that they descended several flights of steps before they again stopped. Here he heard the ungrateful sounds of bolts and bars; his arms were unbound, his eyes uncovered, and his conductors left him without saying a word, in what, from the light as they left him, he perceived to be a narrow dungeon, in one corner of which was some straw, destined, he supposed, as a substitute for a bed.

“Oh, my unhappy friends!” exclaimed Ludowico, who was insensible to his own fate, “what new affliction is this for you! At the very moment when I was about to enliven your desponding hearts with the hope of soon embracing your little Ladislaus, to be separated from you and buried in this cursed hole! If I could but have made you acquainted with the discovery which I have made, I would disdain to utter a sigh, although I were assured that
my

my prison was in the very centre of the earth, and guarded by demons, who delight in the sufferings of mortals. My only consolation is, that if you have lost one faithful friend, you will find a comforter in the affectionate Theresia."

Ludowico then threw himself at full length upon the straw, and gave himself up to the most afflicting sensations, occasioned solely by the fatal interruption, which his strange detention had caused to the happiness which he was hastening to convey to his friends. He never once gave a thought to his own condition, till he was roused from his reverie by a scratching in the wall, just by his feet. It resembled the noise of those vermine which always haunt these noxious and solitary places, making their communications between the walls of the dungeons. He concluded it originated in no other cause, and he again abandoned himself to his reflections. The scratching, however, soon became more violent than could have been

occasioned by the exertions of a mouse or rat; and listening again attentively, he thought he heard the breathing of a man, seemingly hard at work. He looked towards the spot whence the noise appeared to proceed, and was soon astonished at the sudden appearance, like that of a light in the adjoining cell, which was seen through a hole in the wall. Presently the light vanished, and he heard a voice exclaim—“Who is here?”

“A friend,” replied Ludowico, “to any one who, like himself, is in distress.”

“You are in the dark,” continued the voice. “Approach the light, and you will find a hole in the wall sufficiently large to admit you passing through it. Come into my cell, where you will enjoy light, and I shall have the satisfaction of conversing with a fellow-creature, to which I have long been a stranger. May I ask the cause of your being brought to this loathsome place?”

“I know neither the place where I am,

nor

nor the cause of my being brought to it," replied Ludowico.

"I can inform you," said the stranger, "that you are now in one of the dungeons of the citadel of Cracow, of which my father is governor."

"You are then that Zedeo Darnim," said Ludowico, "of whom I have heard so much."

"The same," replied he; "and I need not be astonished at your having heard my name mentioned, since I overheard you exclaim upon the name of Theresia—I presume you mean Theresia Dauvernop."

"I do," said Ludowico.

"Then you know," added Zedeo, "the cause of my present confinement, in which I have lingered during several months, and of which I can see no prospect of a termination."

"Your sufferings, great as they may seem to you, have been nothing to those which she has undergone," replied Ludo-

wico. "If they have never reached your ears, I will acquaint you with them."

"I have never heard of them," said Zedeo, "and am curious to know what has happened to one who has involuntarily given me so much uneasiness on her account, and suffered so much on mine."

Ludowico then gave him the whole narrative of Theresia's misfortunes, as he had heard it from Rosomaski.

"Is it possible," exclaimed Zedeo, "that parents can be so inflexibly blind! It is happy for Mrs. Dauvernop, that she recovered her sight before her end; but my father, I believe, will die in his errors. I will now relate to you my story, which is disastrous enough, but has neither the marvellous nor the interesting incidents of that of Theresia."

"I was in hopes that our parents would have renounced the resolution of bringing about an union which nature seemed to disapprove, but my father was more ardent than ever to conquer my resistance. He
had

had for a long time made me experience horrid scenes, but I never saw him so furious as on that cruel day succeeding the fatal night which he had given me to deliberate on my definitive answer. Scarcely had the sun lighted my chamber, when he presented himself with the most menacing looks, and demanded the result of my reflections. I declared that I could not love Theresia, and that no human force should ever constrain me to marry her. He rolled his sparkling eyes, and ordered me to repeat my answer, if I dared to do it. I repeated it, however, and he cried out—

‘Come on then; do your duty.’

“At that instant, I beheld four soldiers enter the room armed, and trembled as at my last moment. They seized and conducted me to this dungeon, where I found every thing, as you now behold it, prepared for my reception. The violent emotions with which I had been agitated during the preceding night, had exhausted me with fatigue, and I soon fell into a sleep, or ra-

ther, a state of languid stupor. I was roused by the opening of the door of my dungeon, which by the hoarse and reluctant grating of its hinges, seemed to have long enjoyed undisturbed repose. The persons who entered, brought me provisions and wine: they also presented me with pen, ink, paper, my usual implements of drawing, and all those books which I had been accustomed to read, containing plans of sieges, battles, fortifications, and an account of the exploits of the most famous generals. As military tactics had ever been my father's most ardent pursuit, and he earnestly wished me to tread in his steps, he undoubtedly desired that my temporary confinement should not militate against my progress in these favourite studies. That those might be uninterrupted, they every night furnished me with a lamp. One night they chanced to light it rather later than usual, and I thought I perceived a ray of light under my bed. I stooped down, and by extending my arms, I felt that there
existed

existed a small fissure at the bottom of the wall. I instantly removed the bed, and perceived that there had been a perforation in the wall of near a foot in depth, and of an equal circumference, in the middle of which existed a small aperture, of not more than the size of a ring. I guessed that it had been the work of some prisoner, who had preceded me in this dreary abode, and who had been transferred to some other part, before he could finish his labours and effect his escape. As I had all my mathematical instruments, I instantly began to enlarge the aperture with the strongest pair of compasses I could find, in the hopes that it would afford me the means of escaping. With this feeble instrument I continued working, until the aperture was large enough to admit the passage of my body through it; but then, to my inexpressible anguish, I found that I was in another dungeon, no less impenetrable than my own, and that the light which I had seen, was only that admitted through

the casement, which was no less strongly barred than that of my own dungeon. I made repeated trials to perforate the walls, but from the inefficiency of my instruments, they have all proved fruitless. I, however, took the pains to conceal the opening in the wall, by replacing the loose stones, and putting my bed before it. I had no thoughts of ever opening it again, until this evening, when I heard the door of the dungeon open, and soon after heard your exclamation. My curiosity was excited by hearing you mention the name of Theresia, which added to my desire of having communication with a fellow-creature in distress. My guards had no sooner brought me a fresh supply of provisions, and trimmed and lighted my lamp, than I removed the bed, and began to displace the loose stones, determined to speak to whoever it might be. I shall rejoice in your company, although, for your sake, I hope I shall not enjoy it long; and, be assured, if ever I should recover my own liberty,

yours

yours shall quickly follow. At present, I have no hopes of it, as my guards, when they enter, always demand whether I am ready to obey my father? to which they as constantly receive a negative; not another word passes, and I conjecture from this, that my father has not yet abandoned his cruel and unnatural scheme."

"I should think, however," said Ludowico, "that you had better gain your liberty by promising to obey your father on your part—Since Theresia is become her own mistress, she appears more averse to matrimony than ever; you may, therefore, address her, without running any risk of her accepting your hand."

"Why should I be less magnanimous than Theresia?" replied Zedeo. "I will never yield to force, what I should refuse to gentle usage. My father shall either release me unconditionally, or I will wait till his death, or mine, shall give me freedom."

They continued discoursing till the day

began to throw a greyish light through the casement; and as Zedeo's guards always brought him his provisions for the day at an early hour, they parted, to avoid being discovered together.

CHAP. XI.

MORE than two years had elapsed without Rhodiska and Rosomaski having heard a syllable from their friends Theresia and Ludowico, although they had written to them repeatedly. The money which Rhodiska had received for her jewels, had been nearly consumed, and all the horrors of poverty, in a foreign country, began to stare them in the face. Rosomaski had in
vain

vain endeavoured to get some employment; which his unacquaintance with every kind of business had prevented him from succeeding in, although he had learned to talk Italian fluently. Rosomaski never failed, in spite of his frequent disappointments, to call once, or oftener, in a week, at the post-office to enquire for letters. One day, on his making the usual enquiry, he received a packet which had the Cracow post mark on it. He hastened home with the utmost impatience, to devour the news from his friends Theresia and Ludowico, for he had not the least doubt that the packet came from one or other of them. He broke open the inclosure, and hastily snatched out a letter which it contained. He looked at the signature, but all his joy was damped and converted into black despair, when he read the name of "Dorothea" at the bottom of it.

"Accursed fiend!" cried Rosomaski, throwing down the letter, and stamping his foot on it; "this is undoubtedly ano-

ther of thy impostures, to further some scheme of that foe who would pursue us round the globe, to gratify his insatiate revenge."

Rhodiska and Paulina, who had flattered themselves with hopes of some alleviation of the horrid prospect before them, when Rosomaski entered the room with an air of unusual hilarity and importance, exclaiming—"A letter from Cracow!" were narrowly watching his countenance, from which they instantly beheld the transient gaiety disappear, and a more than customary gloom overspread it.

"What new affliction has befallen us, my dear Rosomaski?" cried Rhodiska.

"I know not," replied Rosomaski. "I expected that this letter was from one or other of our friends, Theresia or Ludowico, but it has the signature of that treacherous woman Dorothea—What a cruel disappointment!"

"But you have not read its contents," said Rhodiska: "they may be the harbin-

ger of good news. Perhaps conscience has smote the writer, and she gives you such information which may atone, in some mode or other, for the baseness of her conduct towards us. Let us read the letter; it cannot render our prospects more gloomy than they are at present."

Rhodiska took up the letter, and read as follows:—

"COUNT ROSOMASKI,

"A long fit of sickness has brought me to a sense of all my ingratitude and treachery towards the best of mistresses. My pangs are far greater than those which I have contributed to make you suffer, because you have the consolation of innocence, whilst I have all the weight of guilt. I entreat your forgiveness; but it is time that I should endeavour to merit it, by making an ingenuous confession to you of the author of your persecutions.

secutions. You will, no doubt, be startled at first, when you read his name; but I shall give you such proofs of my veracity as must, upon reflection, banish every doubt from your mind. The author of all your persecutions is your false friend Ludowico.”—

“ Infamous liar!” exclaimed Rosomaski, interrupting Rhodiska.—“ Read no more, my Rhodiska, the very signature was enough for me.”

“ As we shall pay no credit to what she writes,” replied Rhodiska, “ there can be no harm in going through it. We may gather something that may throw some light on the future intentions of our enemies.”

“ As you please,” said Rosomaski.

Rhodiska then continued reading:

—“ I think I behold your astonishment, but consider that you have seen little of the world, and that it has been no difficult matter to pass the grossest deceptions on you. Now, for the motives of Ludowico’s hatred towards you—He could not witness the charms of Rhodiska, and be constantly with her,

her, without receiving a deep impression from them. In proportion as his love for your wife increased, his friendship for you diminished, and at last was converted into hate. He soon discovered that I was chagrined at losing my mistress's confidence, (which was evidently the case after her marriage,) and Zerbetta seemed to have supplanted me.—One day he said to me—‘Dorothea, I perceive your chagrin, and am at no loss to account for the cause of it. You are no longer the confidant of Rhodiska, but the servant.—But why should you complain? Rosomaski owes his life, his fortune to my parents—he owes his Rhodiska to me; for although he has won the prize, yet my arm contributed as much as his to the defeat of Lanfranco's emissaries, which laid the basis of his future success. He forgets all these obligations; he looks upon me in no other light than as a sort of upper domestic. I no longer share his confidence, since I am no longer necessary to him. Our situation is alike; let us join
our

our efforts together, to reduce this haughty and ungrateful couple to a sense of what they owe to our services—Give me your assistance, and we will soon convince them that we can be as formidable foes as we have been useful friends.

“ My own feelings were so acute at the difference of treatment which I received from Rhodiska, (whose favour Zerbetta wholly engrossed,) that I consented to his proposal. I did not then know that his design was to raise himself, and sink you in the esteem of your wife ; but he afterwards confessed it to me. His first plot was that of the midnight attack. As he had been acquainted by his father, who thoroughly knew the existence of the subterranean outlet, with the secret of the trap-door, he introduced those three persons who made the feigned attack upon you. He pretended to come to your assistance, but suffered his accomplices to make their escape, as had been previously concerted between them. The wound which
he

he received, was merely an accident, occasioned by their sham fight in the dark. He was also the author of the affair of Mr. Vendost, by which he intended to create a jealousy between you and your wife, and to rouse you to ill treat her, which would stir up a spirit of disaffection and resentment in her, by which he hoped to profit. He planned the affair of Theresia, that he might plunge you into the deepest distress, and then appear as your deliverer. It was his love for Rhodiska which made him so indifferent to your proposal to him to pay his addresses to Theresia. He contrived the seizure of myself and Zokalef, and the means of our subsequent escape, by causing your barn to be fired by his other accomplices. It was your *friend* Ludowico who robbed you of your little Ladislaus—When he went to Jaroslow to restore the diamonds to Mrs. Vendost, he found her in the utmost despair, not as he told you, for fear of losing her son, but because she had already lost him. Ludowico promised
her

her that, if she would suffer him to retain the jewels, he would find the means of substituting your son, who exactly resembled hers, and pass the deception so as not to have it suspected by any person in the world. Mrs. Vendost greedily caught at the proposition. Ludowico tutored the counterfeit Mrs. Blorzeim, and repaid Mrs. Vendost for her diamonds, by putting the little Ladislaus into her hands. Ludowico now thought himself secure of possessing Rhodiska, since your despair for the loss of your son had brought you to the brink of the grave; and he hoped, as the greatest obstacle in the way of his success with Rhodiska would have been removed, that he should be able to prevail upon her, in whose estimation he already stood so high, to have recompensed his supposed services by taking him into your place. Nothing remained but to precipitate you into the grave by some new misfortune, and he executed the machine of the transparency; but this, his last effort, instead of overwhelming

whelming you, as he hoped, had the different effect of rousing you to energy, and causing you to remove to Cracow, where he could do you no farther injury, without danger of detection. In his last visit to Jaroslow, he began to discover those charms in Mrs. Vendost, to which the beauties of Rhodiska had before rendered him blind; losing all hopes of abating your attachment to each other, he began to think of making his fortune by marrying Mrs. Vendost, who, by his means, continued in the unjust possession of an immense fortune. Mrs. Vendost was too much in his power to refuse him, even if she had not felt an inclination towards him, which was really the case. In order to avoid your discovery of your son Ladislaus, and the detection of his treachery, Ludowico engaged the berlin and the brigands who decoyed you out of Cracow, and carried you to Genoa; after which, he married Mrs. Vendost, under the assumed name of Rugonner, and they live together
at

at Jaroslow. I have now done you all the justice which remains in my feeble power, by acquainting you with the name, the motives, and the retreat of your persecutor. I have, moreover, given you intelligence of your son, whom you thought you had lost for ever; all I ask in return is your forgiveness.

“ DOROTHEA.”

Rosomaski, during the reading of this letter, gave signs of surprise and grief.—It was no sooner finished than he exclaimed—

“ Oh Heavens! my peace is now totally wrecked. Ludowico is no longer my friend—he has betrayed me—persecuted me! Can I believe it? Ludowico treacherous! No; it is not possible. I will write to him instantly, and make him explain himself—He will no doubt refute every syllable of this infamous accusation. Alas! I am deceived!

ceived—my suspicions are too well founded, and my misfortune is too certain. Ludowico has never answered any of my letters—he is conscious of his guilt—I will no longer remain here in suspense—I will return to Poland, and ascertain the cause of Theresia's neglect—I will fly to Jaroslow, and if I find Ludowico in the fictitious Rugonner, I will——”

“My dear Rosomaski,” cried Rhodiska, “let us no longer be the sport of these impostures and forgeries. This letter is undoubtedly of the latter kind—the signature assures me so. Shall we trust a known perfidious domestic, rather than a long-tried friend? Calm yourself; we have hitherto acted with too much precipitancy; let us now adopt policy, and endeavour to clear up our doubts. I am of opinion that you send an express to Cracow to find out Theresia. Our letters may have miscarried, and if she be living, she will soon clear up all our doubts.”

Rosomaski was convinced of the propriety

priety of this proposal, and he acceded to it; but an obstacle lay in the way of its execution. Their money was so nearly exhausted, that after having given the messenger sufficient to bear his expences to Cracow and back, they would not have sufficient to maintain them till his return. Rhodiska and Rosomaski looked at each other in silent despair; at length, Rhodiska broke silence.

“ I have only one more valuable left,” said she, “ and I never imagined that I should have been reduced to the humiliating necessity of parting with that; but our situation demands energy. I will sell my mother’s diamond ring, the last pledge of her affection, and wait the result in patience. Perhaps Theresia may be living; if so, she will instantly remit to us the interest of our broken fortune, which remains in her hands.”

Whilst Rhodiska and Paulina went out together to dispose of the ring, all Rosomaski’s pangs were renewed; his breast
was

was oppressed, and his eyes were bathed in tears. After remaining some time in a state of insensibility, he exclaimed in a plaintive accent:—

“ Friendship! I have too long believed in thy existence; I am now assured that thou art only a chimera—a fantastic shade. Thine image, in the hands of men, is only another resource to aid them to deceive more surely. Interest is the only idol of their worship. How could I flatter myself that I possessed a true friend, when examples of common friendship are only known by hearsay? Mankind are too much swayed by their interest and passions, to admit the pure flame of friendship to exist in their breasts. The really wise man is persuaded that tender, generous and grateful hearts are scarcely ever to be found; but he does not the less experience for all mankind a sentiment of benevolence. He does not hope to find a friend; but in the services which he renders to his like, he offers homage to the Supreme Arbitrator

tor of the universe. I have paid my tribute to humanity, and I have had the happiness of making men ungrateful."

As he was indulging in these gloomy reveries, Rhodiska and Paulina were in search of a jeweller's shop. They soon found one and entered it. Rhodiska presented the ring to the master, and desired to know what he would give for it?

"It has been very valuable," replied the jeweller, after he had viewed it attentively; "but it is not in the fashion of the present day. As it may lay long upon hand, no one, I believe, will give you what it is really worth. I could not afford more than a hundred ducats for it."

"We are foreigners," said Rhodiska, "and some unexpected disappointments have reduced us to a necessity——"

Her heart was so full of grief that she could articulate no more. A gentleman, who had been talking to the jeweller when they entered the shop, but had retired to another part, to give them an opportunity
of

of transacting their business, now came forward, and requested permission to look at the ring.

“It is a pity that you should dispose of this jewel, Madam,” said he; “perhaps it is the precious pledge of some departed friend.”

Rhodiska sobbed aloud.

“Permit me,” continued the gentleman, “to offer you the hundred ducats, and to prevent the necessity of parting with the ring, which seems to give you so much pain.”

Without waiting for an answer he returned the ring to Rhodiska, desired the jeweller to pay the lady the hundred ducats on his account, and instantly disappeared.

“Is it possible,” cried Rhodiska, “that so much disinterestedness and generosity exists in human nature?”

“It is not very common,” replied the jeweller, “but it is the characteristic of that gentleman.”

“Pray, Sir, what is his name?” said Rhodiska. “Let me know this generous benefactor, that if ever it should be in our power to repay him——”

“He does not think of such a thing,” replied the jeweller; “he wishes his good deeds to be private—I should offend him by making him known. I have too many obligations to him, to risk incurring his displeasure.”

“Then pray inform him at least, when you see him again,” said Rhodiska, “that his benevolence has made a deep impression on a heart which is fully sensible of it.”

“I will do that,” replied the jeweller.

He then gave the money to Rhodiska, who took leave of him, and quitted the shop with very different sensations from those with which she had entered it. She hastened homewards, and found Rosomaski as she had left him.

“Let us, my dear Rosomaski,” said she, “continue to preserve a favourable opinion of mankind; the example which I
have

have just met with, is a proof that they are not all persecutors of each other, and that we have hitherto been unfortunate in falling in with the worst of them—This day has made us some amends.”

Rosomaski was no sooner acquainted with the adventure, than he exclaimed—“Happy Genoa! thou indeed possessest a treasure in such a man.”

When Rhodiska had somewhat calmed the agitation of Rosomaski, by some well-timed reflections upon the interposition of Providence, who had thus raised them up an unexpected benefactor in their deepest affliction, she desired him to go in search of a messenger, whilst she prepared a packet for Theresia. She then wrote a circumstantial detail of all their misfortunes, since their parting at Cracow, related their present distress, and requested her to lose no time in remitting to them some part of their money which was in her hands. She concluded by intreating her to clear up their doubts respecting the fidelity of Lu-

dowico ; inclosed the letter of Dorothea, on whose bare word she was disinclined to think ill of one for whom they had always entertained the tenderest esteem.

Rosomaski returned just as she had finished her packet, and, after having perused it, gave it his hearty approbation. He had brought with him a messenger, who was instructed to keep his business a profound secret, lest he should fall in with any of the emissaries of his enemy on his route, and directed to make the utmost speed.—The messenger was then furnished with the packet, and money for his expences.

CHAP. XII.

WHILST these things were passing at Genoa, Theresia was one day reflecting upon the uncertainty of human happiness, when she was interrupted in her meditations by a messenger, who requested her to accompany him to a lady, who was at the point of death, and had some important intelligence concerning her friends, Rhodiska and Rosomaski, to disclose to her. Theresia no sooner heard these dear names mentioned, than she was in hopes of hearing some intelligence of the persons to whom they belonged, and she instantly set out with the messenger, accompanied

panied by a single domestic. Her guide conducted her to one of the inns of the city, and introduced her into a chamber, where she beheld, extended on a bed, a woman, whose face was nearly concealed in a bandage. She was no sooner announced, than the sick person exclaimed—

“Are you Theresia Dauvernop, the friend of the unfortunate Rhodiska and Rosomaski?”

“I am that person,” replied Theresia.

“Then you behold,” continued the sick person, “a woman who has been several times rendered by fate the instrument of their sufferings. I am the unhappy and guilty Vendost, whom you must have heard them name.”

“I have heard them name you, indeed,” replied Theresia, “but I never heard them reflect upon you. They never attributed any guilt to you. What is the cause of the sad situation in which I behold you? Why have you desired to see me?”

“To confess to you that guilt of which
the

the unhappy sufferers are, you say, ignorant, and to make all the atonement which now remains in my power," replied Mrs. Vendost. "If your friends have acquainted you with my story, you can be no stranger to the motives which induced me to substitute their son in the place of mine, whom death bereaved me of."

"Was it you then who deprived them of their little Ladislaus?" said Theresia, interrupting her. "Where is that child?"

"Do not give way to the resentment which you must feel at my confessing myself guilty of detaining a son from his parents. Let my sufferings excite your commiseration, and listen to what I am going to tell you.

"Soon after my husband's death, my grief was encreased by the decline of my son's health; I shut myself up, and refused to see all company—I was inconsolable.—Besides the loss of my husband, I dreaded to lose the only fruit of our union, and with him all my fortune; which being de-

rived from Mr. Vendost, would, in case of his son's death, have gone to his own relations. I saw no one but Mr. Mozogdar, who was my favoured lover. One day we took an airing together in my carriage with my son, to try whether a change of air would not re-establish his health; but alas! he yielded up his last breath on the journey. Mr. Mozogdar and myself were contriving how we should conceal this accident, so fatal to both our hopes, when, as we crossed a forest not far distant from the Castle of Vistulof, we heard some plaintive cries, resembling those of a child, who summonses, by his expressive though inarticulate sounds, the assistance of its mother or nurse. Mr. Mozogdar alighted, and proceeded towards the spot whence the sounds appeared to come. He presently returned, exclaiming—

‘Here’s a stroke of fortune! Heaven has sent you a lovely infant, to replace the one which you have lost. He is nearly of the same age, and otherwise bears a strong
resemblance

resemblance to him. No longer entertain any fears that your husband's relations will be able to deprive you of your fortune. Here is a proof that your son is not dead.'

"I left the carriage, and accompanied Mr. Mozogdar to the foot of a tree, where I perceived an infant wrapped up in a blanket. His eyes were red with weeping; his voice was faint, as if nearly exhausted; his little arms, which were agitated with all the contortions of pain, denoted what he suffered—deprived of nourishment and the attentions of a mother. This present of fortune was too favourable to my designs, not to make me resolve to profit by it.—No one, except Mr. Mozogdar and my coachman, the latter of whom was a discreet man, and devoted to my interest, knew any thing about the death of my son; so that it was easy for me to substitute the foundling in his stead, and to assure myself of the possession of the fortune left by Mr. Vendost. I stripped my deceased child, and buried it in a corner of the
L 5 forest,

forest, and then dressed the foundling in his cloaths. On my return to Jaroslow, I imparted the secret to my two brethren, who were rejoiced, as by this fraud they were in hopes of keeping Mr. Vendost's fortune in our family. They advised me to keep my chamber some days longer, as if to re-establish the health of my child, by which means the substitution of a convalescent child would pass off without suspicion. In this interval, as the little Ladislaus was of too tender an age to know his mother, I succeeded, by being always lavish of my caresses, to render him fond of me, and to bestow on me that tender appellation which belonged to another.

“ We were flattering ourselves with the success of our scheme, when a person suddenly appeared, and laid claim to the little Ladislaus on the behalf of his real parents; but as neither Rhodiska nor Rosomaski were present when the matter was brought to a hearing before the magistrates, I prevailed, by dint of the artifices which I had made
use

use of to conciliate the regard of the child, to delay the passing of a definitive sentence till Rhodiska and Rosomaski could be present, and to preserve the child in my possession.

“ The affair had, however, got wind, and the relations of Mr. Vendost were too much interested in this affair to let it drop. Mr. Mozogdar, perceiving the danger which I was in, of losing my fortune and of having my deception exposed, discontinued his visits, after having promised that he would keep my secret. I had still several admirers of my fortune, (who were ignorant of the precarious situation in which it was,) but only one of my person. This was a Mr. Rugonner, who entertained for me a most violent passion. He was about twenty-six years of age, possessed of a fine person, born with a lofty and generous soul, and inclined to beneficence; but his good qualities were depreciated by the most fiery and impetuous temper I ever witnessed.

“ I had still some attractions, (fatal ones they have been to me,) and he conceived the most violent passion for me, as he would perhaps have done for the first woman who enjoyed a tolerable share of beauty. I will confess my own weakness; several years older than Mr. Rugonner, I was flattered by his attentions—I overlooked his rough manners, which I thought were more than counterbalanced by the energetic sentiments with which I had inspired him. I was vainly mad of having kindled this amorous delirium in a young and unexperienced heart—I made use of all the arts of coquetry to keep his passion alive, which I had no need of artifice to excite, as his strong passions and inexperience had subdued him to my hands—I made him the slave of all my whims and caprices; but I was forced to make many sacrifices to allay his propensity to jealousy. Although naturally flighty, and given to inconstancy, yet I was obliged to constrain myself, and to receive with coldness, at least

least in his presence, all the gallantries which were offered me by my other admirers. It is true, that if he would admit of no partner in my heart, yet he gave himself up to me without reserve; he seemed to love only me, and to regard in me the whole world. He consulted my taste and disposition for shew and dress, and spared nothing to make me appear worthy of being his captivator.

“In his enthusiasm, he proposed to me to seal our mutual attachment by the solemnities of wedlock. He wished, as he expressed it, to fix his happiness for ever. I dreaded his fiery temper, and his inclination to jealousy. I was tempted to refuse his offer; but the state of suspense in which I was, (being in daily expectation of having the claim of my adopted child renewed, and of being consequently reduced to my former mean state,) triumphed over my repugnance to this match. Rugonner became my husband, and it was not long before I had reason to repent it.

“One evening when we were at a mask-
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ed ball, a young man addressed some gallant conversation to me, and I answered it with that freedom which appeared to me to be of very little consequence, as I was concealed under a mask. I should not, however, have conducted myself with so little circumspection, if I had imagined that Mr. Rugonner was so near me. Having, without informing me of it, changed his dress, he was at my side during the whole of this conversation, at which a husband, less given to jealousy than he was, would not have taken offence. When we left this dissipated assembly, I observed that my husband neither spoke to me nor gave me any reply, as we returned home. We had no sooner arrived there than he said to me, with a tone which denoted his rankling mind—‘ I would advise you, Madam, another time to be more careful of your conduct: I love you to madness, but you are aware that I am jealous to excess. Consider that if you should be capable of being
unfaithful.

unfaithful to me, I should be sure to sacrifice first you and then myself."

"I was terrified at this strange language, and trembled at reflecting on the danger which I should continually be in. I was aware, but too late, of the misfortune of being united to so violent a man. As Rugonner had inspired me with terror, I resolved to banish every thing like levity from my conduct; and, fortunately, there occurred no other circumstance calculated to rouse the phrenetic motions of his jealousy. He continued to bestow on me all the marks of the most passionate love, and I returned it so well, that he appeared to be content with my procedure. By means of prudence and reserve, I enjoyed the pleasures of a peaceable union. I began to hope that I should suffer no more sallies of passion from my husband; and flattered myself that we were going to live perfectly happy. But at the end of some months, I perceived that our household expences were considerably diminished; his countenance

nance became less serene, and he appeared to have lost much of the pleasure which he had been used to give signs of in my company. One day he told me that his excessive expences had ruined his fortune, and that he was obliged to go to Cracow, on an affair of the utmost importance, which he expected would open a new source of riches to him. Without entering into any farther explanations with me, he acquainted me that every thing was ready for our departure. I obeyed in silence, and quitted Jaroslow with a secret awe: which was, perhaps, a forecast of my bidding it adieu for ever.

“Two months have elapsed since our arrival in this city, where we fixed our residence in this inn. About a fortnight since, a remarkable change was operated in the temper of Mr. Rugonner. He still bestowed on me all the tokens of the most enthusiastic love, but he no longer appeared to have his attention constantly engaged in finding out some new source
of

of amusement. Every morning he went out with a pensive air, and continued absent till dinner-time. Whenever I attempted to discover the place to which he constantly resorted, he refused to answer my questions. He passed every evening with me: sometimes we went to the theatre, at others we took a walk; but those places which are the most gloomy and melancholy, were always those to which he gave the preference. Nevertheless this dark humour did not in the least diminish his attachment to me.

“ On the evening before the last, he proposed to me to take our usual walk. I agreed, and we set out. As we went along, he complained of a violent head-ach, and under pretence of breathing a more free and pure air, he conducted me to the top of a hill, which stands about a quarter of a league beyond the walls, and whose farther side presents to the eye a large and deep precipice. At the sight of this hideous place, and the suspicious look of
gloomy

gloomy satisfaction with which Rugonner contemplated it, I cannot express the emotions of horror which seized me.

‘Oh, my dear Rugonner!’ exclaimed I, ‘what secret grief torments you, and undermines our happiness? Why do you not answer me? Your looks congeal my blood; speak, I entreat you.’

‘What charms,’ cried he, with a bewildered look, ‘has the prospect of this rude spot, of this gaping chasm, and those menacing rocks, for a soul like mine, driven to the brink of ruin and despair?’

‘Tell me,’ cried I, ‘what you mean by ruin and despair—acquaint me with the cause of the black clouds which hang over your brow: perhaps it may be in my power to dispel them, and calm this alarming agitation.’

“Without giving me any answer, he placed his hands before his face, and remained for some time as if in deep thought; he then advanced hastily towards me. I drew back with fright, at perceiving all his features.

tures distorted, and his whole figure become like that of a man in the most extreme agitation of phrenzy. He seized me, and locked me in his arms; then, intermingling tenderness with fury, he imprinted on my face the most passionate kisses, whilst he drew me towards the edge of the precipice, as he cried out—

‘O, my dearest wife! my heart has just received an incurable wound; my last hope is destroyed; I am ruined beyond recovery; and I can no longer endure life, because humiliation is insupportable to me; but after my death, your jointure may attract admirers, and you may form new connections. Horrible idea! I cannot bear the thought of your being in the arms of another. O, adored woman! perishing in your embrace, and mingling my last sighs with yours, a wretched and cruel husband can plunge with satisfaction into the jaws of death.’

“At these horrible sounds, I uttered the most piercing cries, and struggled to dis-engage

engage myself from his dangerous embrace; but this madman grasped me more forcibly—redoubled his homicidal caresses—dragged me to the brink of the abyss—bade me a fatal adieu, and precipitated me along with him.

“As soon as I felt myself launched into the yielding air, I lost all sense; but after a while, I began to be sensible of my existence. I looked round, and instantly relapsed into my former state, when I beheld myself stretched out on the lifeless corpse of this madman, at once the executioner and victim of his jealous fury, who still held me fast locked in his arms. His mangled figure presented the most deplorable spectacle. It was some time before I again recovered my senses, and then I was no longer in the dreadful abyss. I was astonished to find myself lying on the bed of a cottager, who, as he conducted his sheep to the hill, had perceived Rugonner and myself stretched out on the sand, at the bottom of the precipice. As he discovered

covered some symptoms of lingering life about me, he conveyed me to his hut, where, by the care of his wife, I was restored to animation. After having received all the assistance which their humble means afforded, I was brought back to this inn, where I might receive the best surgical aid. Rugonner was instantly crushed to death, and I suppose that this wretched man must have prevented my instant death, by falling underneath me ; or rather, why may I not presume that the hand of Providence respited me, to give me some little time to repent of my fatal excesses, and to restore the little Ladislaus to the injured Rhodiska and Rosomaski, who, in the event of my sudden death, must have remained for ever ignorant of the fate of their son ?”

The unhappy Mrs. Vendost appeared then too much exhausted to utter any more words, but she made a sign to the woman who attended her, who left the room, and presently returned with a young lad.

“ There,” said Mrs. Vendost, “ is the
lost

lost Ladislaus. Restore him to his parents—intreat them to forgive me, and may Heaven also seal my pardon!”

As soon as Theresia perceived the young Ladislaus, she ran to him, and embraced him, saying—“ Poor orphan! you will find no mother in this place, but you shall not want the protection which a friend of your mother can afford you. She is happy to receive you to her bosom.”

Theresia then turned round towards Mrs. Vendost, but she was insensible, and death had closed her last scene. Theresia instantly quitted the room with Ladislaus, and conducted him to her own residence. She had scarcely entered the door, before one of the domestics informed her, that a strange person, whose language none of them understood, had just before arrived with a packet addressed to her.

“ If he should bring some news of my friends,” exclaimed Theresia, “ what a day of happiness would this be to me!”

The messenger was instantly introduced
to

to her, and presented her with the packet, uttering at the same time some words which she did not understand. Without losing any time in conjectures, she tore open the packet, which was to give her certainty, and beheld the signature of Rhodiska.

“It is from my dearest friend,” cried she starting, and embracing young Ladislaus; “and you, my lovely child, have yet a mother and, I hope, a father living.”

Theresia then ran over the contents of the letter; but her joy at finding Rhodiska and Rosomaski were both alive, was clouded by that part which alluded to Ludowico. She opened the inclosure to which it referred, and which was the letter signed Dorothea, and read it with extreme trepidation. Her feelings must be presumed to have been painfully acute, at reading those black charges brought against the only man, whom she had ever deemed worthy of, and on whom she had unreservedly bestowed, her heart. She still kept her eyes fixed on the paper, although her thoughts were

were totally abstracted from it. Agitated betwixt hopes and fears, she knew not whether she ought to believe Ludowico guilty or innocent. His sudden disappearance, conjoined with the certainty of Mrs. Vendost having married a Mr. Rugonner, rendered appearances of guilt strongly against him. It was some time before she recollected that the messenger was present. As he came from Genoa, the language which he made use of must have been Italian, and that she did not understand. She spoke to him in French, and he immediately answered in the same language. Theresia interrogated him particularly as to the situation of her friends, but the messenger knew nothing of it; he had never seen them before the day on which Rosomaski engaged him to undertake the journey to Cracow.

Theresia having ordered the messenger to be taken care of by the domestics, immediately proceeded to the inn, where the corpse of Mrs. Vendost lay, to make some inquiries

inquiries concerning her husband ; but no one knew any thing about him : neither was there among their papers the least clue to give her the information which she wanted. Jaroslow seemed to be the only place to which she could direct her inquiries, and she dispatched a messenger thither, with orders to spare neither trouble nor expence to discover who was Mr. Rugonner, the husband of Mrs. Vendost. After an absence of near a week, the messenger returned with the news that Mr. Rugonner was a stranger in Jaroslow, and no one could tell whence he came.

This circumstance raised a suspicion in the bosom of Theresia, that the unfortunate Rugonner must have been Ludowico ; and she experienced a momentary happiness, at never having suffered the secret of her attachment to escape her : she would have been excessively mortified to have entrusted it even to the ear of friendship.

The situation of her friends, verging upon want in a strange land, would not

admit of the messenger's being delayed to wait the result of farther inquiries; and Theresia having procured bills of credit upon Genoa, delivered one set of them to the messenger, and sent another by post, to guard against accidents. She also gave the messenger a letter addressed to Rhodiska, in which, after lamenting their late misfortunes, and expressing her happiness at hearing they were still alive, of which she began to doubt, as of all the letters which they had sent to her, not one had ever come to hand, she gave them a circumstantial detail of the catastrophe of Mrs. Rugonner, and of the happy event which it had produced to them, of restoring their long lost son, to whom, in their absence, she would supply the place of a mother. She informed them of the fruitless pains which had been taken to ascertain whether Ludowico was the counterfeit Rugonner, and of the uncertainty in which she still remained of the fate of the former. She concluded by saying, that she would
have

have instantly accompanied the messenger, and brought Ladislaus with her, if her own and their affairs had not demanded her presence in Cracow; but that she had thought proper to detain Ladislaus as a pledge for their return, which, she concluded, they might safely do, and reside in tranquillity with her, under some feigned name, to escape the malignancy of their enemies. The messenger was then sent back, with instructions to make the utmost speed.

CHAP. XIII.

IN the mean while, the suspicion of Ludowico's treachery preyed upon the vitals of Rosomaski, and rendered him nearly insensible to the approaching horrors of want. Rhodiska, who beheld his pangs, and dreaded lest the return of the messenger whom they had dispatched to Cracow, should bring them acquainted with new misfortunes, began to lose her fortitude. Rosomaski appeared lost in the supposed grave of Ludowico's friendship, and she had now no friend—no Theresia, in whose bosom to pour her anguish. Paulina was in every respect worthy of her love—of
her

her confidence ; but she dreaded to increase the sorrows which the distress of both her parents had visibly produced in her. After a long struggle to conceal her weakness, Rhodiska could not prevent the decline of her health from becoming too apparent. Rosomaski instantly recovered his sensibility : he threw his arms about her neck, and intreated her, in the most endearing terms, to endeavour to preserve a life on which his own, and that of their dear Paulina depended. He began to perceive his error, in having suffered the supposed loss of a friend to render him forgetful of the assured affections of a most amiable wife ; and he vowed, from that time, to banish friendship from his heart, and to let his affection for her retain the entire sovereignty of it. Rhodiska was most sensibly affected at these revived endearments : she returned her husband's caresses with equal ardour, and affected to smile ; but it was evident that her smiles

were only a mask to hide her despondency and rapid decay.

Their whole stock of money had been expended several days, and they were compelled to dispose of such cloaths as they could spare, to eke out their existence, till the messenger, of whose return they were in hourly expectation, should arrive.— There was some rent due to the landlord at whose house they lodged, and probably guessing at their reduced situation, he made a demand of it. What was to be done? They had disposed of every thing but the cloaths which covered them. Rosomaski ingenuously confessed their situation to the landlord, and expressed his hopes that the messenger, whom they had sent to Cracow, would return in a day or two, and not only enable him to pay what was due, but compensate him for his kindness. The landlord was not to be so satisfied, and Rhodiska's diamond ring was deposited with him, as a security for what was due. Another week elapsed, during
which

which this unfortunate family lived nearly *en cameleon*; and the avaricious and pitiless landlord then told them that they must seek other lodgings, as he expected on that or the next day a family to come from the country, who would take up the whole of his house, and that he could not think of losing such excellent lodgers. Rosomaski intreated him to spare them one room, if it were only a garret; but the landlord persisted in his refusal. He told them, however, that he rented a house adjoining the city walls, which indeed was not so good as his own, but that if there was a vacant room in it, they should be welcome to remain till they should be able to suit themselves, without giving themselves any trouble about the rent, until they should be able to pay it without distressing themselves. Rosomaski thanked him for this seemingly generous offer, which was, in reality, only intended to get them out of the house. As they did not like to appear in the streets by day, in the only

undress which remained to them, the landlord consented to their remaining till night, when he himself conducted them to the place whither they were to remove.

Rosomaski was struck with horror and indignation when the landlord stopped at a wretched ruinous habitation, whose exterior denoted the residence of misery and squalid poverty, and told them that was the house; but he thought proper to dissemble his feelings, till he should be in a condition to resent this insult. On entering the house, the landlord demanded of a woman, whose business it was to let out the numerous apartments to poor people, and to receive the rents from them, whether she could not find a room for the *gentlefolks* whom he brought with him? She answered, that there was only a single room vacant at the top of the house, which she was afraid would not suit gentlefolks.

“We will put up with any thing for the day or two that we shall want it,” said Rosomaski, assuming a cheerful tone.

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The landlord then wished them a good night, and the old woman conducted them to the garret, which, with its furniture, baffled all description. Rhodiska, whose tottering frame Rosomaski had with difficulty supported to this dreary abode, no sooner looked inside it, than she sunk down in a silent agony. Rosomaski desired her to be comforted, and leaving her to the care of Paulina, instantly vanished, and not long after, returned with a little wine and some bread and cheese, which was a comforting sight to those who had been twenty-four hours without tasting any thing. They then lay down in a state not to be described, almost wishing not to behold the light of the returning day.

The next morning, Rhodiska gave the most alarming symptoms of a violent fever, and Rosomaski and Paulina absolutely forgot the pangs of hunger, to recline over her, in a state of distraction, during the whole of the day.

On the ensuing day, Rosomaski reflected

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that,

that, without food, his beloved wife and daughter must both soon inevitably perish before his eyes; and losing all sense of shame at the degrading humiliation which he was about to submit to, in the sense of their danger, he sallied out, to endeavour to excite the charity of the benevolent.—Most of those whom he solicited, turned a deaf ear to his entreaties; but some bestowed a trifle, with which he bought some refreshment, and hastily carried it home. Without staying to partake of it, he again left the house, and, thinking he might meet with more attention to his tale of woe in the environs, than in the midst of a city full of bustle and noise, he went without the walls, to seek for those whom he deemed not likely to reject his petition.

At that time Paulo Giovanni, a very eminent banker, resided in the city of Genoa. As he was extremely rich, chance, or rather the choice of his parents, who wished to guard against the vices arising from youthful idleness, had determined

him to follow that lucrative profession.— He was naturally so compassionate, that the sight of an unfortunate person never failed to produce in him that lively emotion, which is the source of benevolent actions, and an impulse which delicate souls cannot resist. Though he was in the very flower of his age, yet the simplicity of his dress, the plainness of his equipage, and the frugality of his table, formed a very striking, and, to him, a very honourable contrast against the insolent pomp of the others of his rank. These displayed their magnificence by a *levée* of ignoble noblesse, who submitted to live on terms of intimacy with men whom they despised, and ridiculed behind their backs, upon condition of having pecuniary loans, which were never intended to be repaid. But Giovanni spurned at consequence so unworthily obtained. He submitted indeed to the visits of some of these noblesse, who wished to partake of his fortune, but he gave them no encouragement; his fol-

lowers **were** the indigent and the wretched. They **opened** their sufferings to him without hesitation, because they were assured of attention and relief. His domestics, to please him, had none of those insolent airs, which those of people of fortune generally give themselves. It would have been a crime in the eyes of their master, if they rendered less respect to one than to another—if they pushed back poverty to make way for wealth. No inscription could have been more appropriate to the house of Giovanni, than—“ *This is the asylum of the poor and destitute.*”

Every moment which was not taken up with business, was employed by Giovanni in making the tour of the city and the suburbs. His avowed motive for these pedestrian excursions, was the spring and vigour which the exercise gave to his constitution; but his real inducement was the repast which they afforded to his benevolence, by throwing in his way those objects of distress, who too generally disgust the eyes
of

of rich men, but whom he sought for, in order to have an opportunity of making that use of his wealth for which Heaven bestowed it upon him. As he was universally known throughout the city, his generosity was frequently abused by unworthy objects; for it was a maxim with him, that it is better to be ten times deceived, than to deny one who wanted and deserved his bounty. In order, however, to prevent, in some measure, the too frequent repetition of such deceptions, he prolonged his philanthropic walks beyond the walls of the city, and, in one of these, his penetrating eyes were attracted by the appearance of a middle-aged man, apparently a foreigner by his dress, which was very ragged, although it betrayed the remains of tarnished finery. The person of the wearer was perfectly congenial with his garb; it appeared worn out with wretchedness and squalid poverty; but it was characteristic of a man, who had deserved and had once seen happier days—it was frank, gentlemanly,

gentlemanly, and somewhat martial. Giovanni's soul was instantly inflamed with its unquenchable thirst of brightening the eye dimmed by sorrow. As the stranger approached Giovanni, he seemed to eye him with that side-way glance, as if to read his heart, and inform himself if it were open to distress, and with that timidity which is always apparent in those who are not professed mendicants, and which arises from a dread of refusal. Giovanni penetrated his thoughts, and he advanced slowly, and directly in a line towards him, with a look so full of complacency, that the unfortunate could not fail of construing it in his favour. It was as much as if he had said—"Fear not—my heart is not of flint—the tale of woe which you have to disclose will readily melt it."

Rosomaski, who was this stranger, and Giovanni met in a kind of hesitating manner, and both stopped, as if by a secret impulse. Rosomaski made a respectful salute, which was immediately returned with

with a polite and affable frankness. As Rosomaski seemed not to have sufficiently recovered his ease, to know in what manner to begin a conversation, which might lead to the story of his distress, Giovanni made some common-place observations on the fineness of the weather, and the gay appearance of the surrounding landscape, to which he received such answers, delivered in a manner to confirm him in his opinion, which the stranger's first appearance had given birth to, that he had a claim to more than capricious fortune had allotted him.

"The noise, the bustle, and the never-changing objects of the city," said Giovanni, "have driven me to seek for a little variety in the country. I have walked a long way without any refreshment, and should now be glad of some. Do you know any house of entertainment near at hand?"

"I observed one," replied Rosomaski,

"a little

“ a little farther on the road you are going.”

“ That will do,” said Giovanni, “ but I do not like to sit down by myself ; if you are not otherwise engaged, I request you will do me the favour of keeping company with me.”

Rosomaski again bowed respectfully, giving, at the same time, a most significant glance at his apparel. Giovanni read his meaning.

“ Dress signifies nothing,” cried he ; “ I never regard the ornamental parts of the outside of a house, but the conveniency and neatness of the furniture within.”

“ You may command me then,” said Rosomaski, a little more assured.

“ You will very much oblige me,” said Giovanni ; and, without any kind of ceremony, he took the stranger by the arm, and they walked together towards the inn.

As they entered it, Giovanni desired the landlord to let them have a room to themselves. Boniface, eying his customers
with

with a most significant glance, (one of whom was in rags, and the other very plainly dressed,) answered that he did not suppose their business was of such importance as to demand much secrecy; and that his private rooms were only for such gentlefolks as could afford to pay well for them. There was room enough for them in the kitchen, if they liked that—if not, they were welcome to walk on, till they could suit themselves.

Giovanno, who was meek as well as charitable, desired some refreshment in the kitchen, since there was no other room for them, adding, that they would make a shift.

“A shift!” cries Boniface, “you have made many worse in your lifetime. My kitchen has been thought a very comfortable place by your superiors, and I am much mistaken if there are not such there at this very moment.”

“Very well,” says Giovanno, “then shew

shew us to it, and let us have the best refreshment you have."

"I have it at all prices," replied Boniface; "put down that which will suit your pockets, and I will warrant you an entertainment suitable to it, though you should lay out like princes."

Giovanno put into his hand a gold ducat. Boniface smiled, and cried out—"By the hollow tooth of St. Winifred, the thumb of St. Agatha, the great toe of St. Bridget, and all the other joints of all the Saints in our calendar, I swear, my masters, that your trade of begging is better than mine of innkeeping; and if I was sure of meeting with such success as yourselves, I would willingly exchange with you. But come along, Signors, one man's money is the same to me as another's: you pay down like princes, and you shall be treated as such. This way, Signors; by the time you have finished your repast, if there is an empty room in the house, you shall have it."

Boniface.

Boniface led the way to the kitchen, where several tradespeople of Genoa were regaling themselves. Giovanni, who was well known to every person in the city, and beloved by all who knew him, no sooner made his appearance, than, to the infinite surprise and mortification of Boniface, all the company rose, and offered him their seats, in the most respectful manner.

“What, landlord!” cried one of them, “have you no other place than your kitchen, to introduce Signor Giovanni into?”

The name of Giovanni, which had reached much farther than a knowledge of his person, was like a thunder-clap to Boniface, to whom it was not strange. He secretly cursed the flippancy of his tongue, which had, as he imagined, affronted one of the most opulent men in Genoa. He began, so soon as he had recovered a little of his native impudence, to make some apologies,

apologies, which Giovanni instantly cut short, by telling him it was refreshment, and not words that he wanted. Boniface insisted upon shewing him into a private room, and Giovanni seeing that all the company were still standing, out of respect to himself, told them he would go into another room, as he perceived that he disturbed them.

A plentiful entertainment was served up in one of the best rooms, and Boniface, to retrieve his former error, waited on them in person. After the cloth was removed, wine was ordered ; but it had not the effect of removing a degree of gloom which shaded the stranger's brow. Giovanni's heart ached to relieve his too apparent distress of mind.—“ I thought the wine good,” said he, “ but you do not seem to enjoy it.”

“ It is indeed excellent, Signor,” replied Rosomaski ; “ but do not let me appear ungrateful in the eyes of a person, who
has

has invited me to partake of a more sumptuous repast than any I have of late been accustomed to, not through any occasion he had of my company, but from his benevolent wishes to relieve my distress.— Pardon me, Signor, but I already know your heart too well, not to discover its spring of action through the veil you would wish to throw over it. It is the mask of philanthropy to enjoy its own sensibility, without hurting that of others who benefit by it. The gratefulness of the repast has been infinitely exceeded by your condescension, in thinking me not unworthy of sitting down at the same table with you; but, alas! Signor, with what satisfaction can a husband—a parent, sit down to delicacies, when, at the instant, his wife—his child are perishing for want of the most common necessities of life?”

“Where?” cried Giovanni, starting up.
“Why had you not told me so the first moment you saw me? But you have said
enough

enough—let us waste no more time in words—this instant conduct me to your abode. But stay—you said they were perishing through want—we must not go empty-handed.”

Rosomaski instantly fell on his knees before Giovanni, who desired him to quit a posture which was becoming to neither of them : and, ringing the bell for Boniface, he ordered him to put some provisions and wine into a basket, with the greatest dispatch. This order was no sooner obeyed, than Giovanni and Rosomaski returned towards the city. Their legs moved quickly, and almost mechanically, for their ideas were wholly absorbed in reflection—Giovanni’s on the happiness of having discovered a family whom he might rescue from wretchedness, and, perhaps, death—Rosomaski’s, on his providential meeting with a person, who had not only the means but the heart to relieve the pangs which pressed so heavily on his mind. Neither
of

of them uttered a word—both imagined they should never arrive soon enough at the place of their destination. In little more than an hour they entered the city gates, and Rosomaski led the way to their wretched, ruinous building, which seemed to support its tottering frame against the ramparts. They mounted to the top, where, on a little straw, covered only by a few rags, which had the appearance of having been collected from the streets, (for the few remaining tiles of the roof afforded no covering,) lay a woman, burnt up with a devouring fever. During twenty-four hours, she had been able to take little sustenance, and she now scarcely breathed.—Paulina, who was then about sixteen years of age, partook of her sufferings, and was in the act of moistening her parched lips with a little water. She was, on her knees, watching every movement of her mother, and seeking some hopes of her recovery. Her caresses—her attentions softened the
pain

pain of the disorder, but they were only so many new wounds in the heart of the mother, who appeared dead to every thing but the feelings of nature and maternal affection.

END OF VOL. II.



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